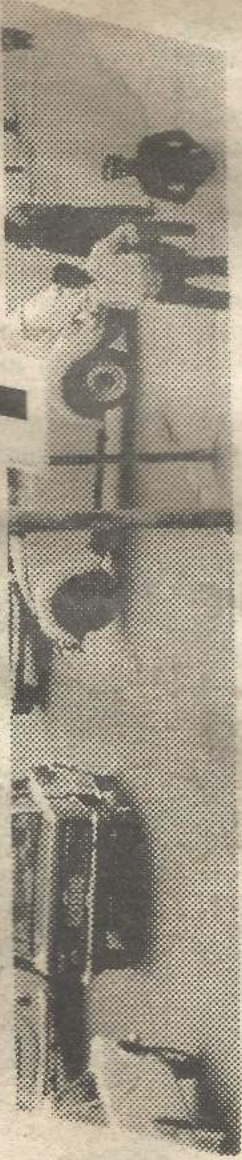


# KICK IT OVER<sup>®</sup>



KICK IT OVER IS A TORONTO  
BASED QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
WHICH EXAMINES PERSONAL  
AND POLITICAL ISSUES FROM  
AN ANARCHIST, FEMINIST AND  
ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.

\$7.50 for 4 issues

Kick It Over

P.O. Box 5811

Station A

Toronto, Ontario

Canada M5W 1P2

Canadian currency for Canada/U.S. currency for U.S.A./four  
pounds for Britain.

# KICK IT OVER<sup>®</sup>



artwork by Lyse Boyce

The Right to Grieve  
Anarchist Strategy  
Recovering Mohawk Traditions

Renovating Fatherhood  
Eco-feminist Imperative  
Guatemalan Activism

No. 21 SUMMER 1988

CANADA - USA - AUSTRALIA - \$2.00 - UK 75p



I am a squaw  
a heathen  
a savage  
basically a mammal

I am female  
only in the ability  
to breed  
and bear papooses  
to be carried  
quaintly on a board  
or lost  
to welfare

I have no feelings

The sinuous planes  
of my brown body  
carries no hint  
of the need  
to be caressed  
desired  
loved  
its only use  
to be raped  
beaten and bludgeoned  
in some  
B grade Western

I have no beauty

The lines  
cut deep  
into my aged face  
are not from bitterness  
or despair  
at seeing my clan destroyed  
one by one  
they are here  
to be painted or photographed  
sold  
and hung on lawyers' walls

I have no emotions

The husky laughter  
a brush of wings  
behind eyes  
soft and searching  
lightly touching others  
is not from caring  
but from the ravaged beat  
of black wings  
rattling against the bars  
of an insanity  
that tells me  
something is wrong here

someone is lying

I am an Indian woman  
  
where I walk  
beauty surrounds me  
grasses bend and blossom  
over valleys and hills  
vast and multicoloured  
in star-quilt glory

I am the keeper  
of generations

I caress the lover gently  
croon as I wrap the baby  
with quietness I talk  
to the old ones  
and carefully lay to rest  
loved ones

I am the strength  
of nations

I sing to the whispering  
autumn winds  
in the snow  
I dance  
slowly  
filling my body  
with power  
feeling it  
knowing it

I am the giver of life  
to whole tribes

I carry the seeds  
carefully through dangerous wastelands  
give them life  
scattered  
among cold and towering concrete  
watch them grow  
battered and crippled  
under all the lies  
I teach them the songs  
I help them to hear  
I give them truth

I am a sacred trust  
I am Indian woman

by Jeannette Armstrong

## INDIAN WOMAN



Tammaro





photo of Tom Porter as a younger man from the Viola White Water Foundation Publication.

# To Make A Stand

An interview with Chief Tom Porter (Sakokwanonkwes) Acting Traditional Chief of the Bear Clan Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne

by Brian Wiles-Heape

*Akwesasne Notes* was begun as a local newsletter twenty years ago at Akwesasne (St. Regis) Mohawk Territory, a reserve which straddles the U.S.-Canadian border near Cornwall Ont., including land in Ontario, Quebec, and New York State. It started as a response to the people's need for a voice: a publication which expressed their concerns about contemporary affairs -- both on and off the reservation -- in a manner consistent with their own traditional Iroquois worldview.

Since then that mimeographed page has grown into a major alternative magazine which enjoys an international reputation, reaching every continent. Throughout its history, *Akwesasne Notes* has helped in shaping the worldview, conscience and commitment of the alternative/anti-authoritarian/eco-spiritual-political movement.

But the fire of January 9th may have changed all of that. All of *Notes'* expensive computer equipment, slowly accumulated through meagre financial contributions since 1968, was destroyed. Damages were estimated at \$300,000 (U.S.). For a small, rural community where the water from wells and the fish from the St. Lawrence River can't be consumed because of contamination by industrial pollutants, such an incredible sum of money is almost impossible to raise. In addition, irreplaceable items such as artworks donated by Native artists, back issues of *Notes*, and pictures of elders long gone, were lost.

Around the first of February, several of us concerned anarcho-pagans travelled to Akwesasne. What we found there was a Nation under siege -- both from within and from without. Tom Porter, a Traditional Chief of the Six Nations Confederacy, granted us this brief interview. He tells the story of the first time he had to stand up for his people, and speaks of his Nation's future.

**Brian Wiles-Heape:** How did you become involved in the Mohawk Nation's struggles? Were you always in the Longhouse, or were you raised as a Christian? **Tom Porter:** I was always associated with the spiritual teachings of my people

-- maybe not active in it, but always associated with it.

I guess my first real stand or position, politically speaking, took place when I was about eighteen or nineteen years old. That was the first time that I actually, as an individual, took a stand that could have had some serious consequences. Other than that -- before that -- I was involved, but I never was in such serious circumstances as that, where I might be able to go to jail for it or something.

What I'm speaking of was when I was, I think, nineteen years old at the time.

Of course, we live in contradiction in many ways -- everybody does, I suppose. One tries not to be too contradictory -- you know, tries to be consistent in some kind of logical way. But it has always been a position of the Chiefs of our Mohawk Nation here, as well as of the other Six Nations, that we are a country, a sovereign, independent Nation. And, of course, the reality and the theory, or the philosophical tradition, are sometimes not exactly the same. That certainly is true amongst all Native peoples -- and maybe other people in the world as well, I guess.

But the older people used to say, used to teach us, that we're not citizens of Canada, or citizens of the United States, or citizens of any other nation in the world. We are citizens of our own nation: the Mohawk Nation and the Six Nations Confederacy. That's the way they taught us, and that was a very dominant teaching -- not something that was rare. But the interactions that we had -- because of how small we are and economics and working -- sometimes we work in Canada and sometimes we work in the United States, with no problems, because there's a special treaty relationship that's been established all through the years between our people and the U.S. and Canada...

But anyway, things came to be polarized or crystalized for me, I guess, when I was nineteen, because many of my uncles and even my father had been either in the Canadian armed forces or the United States armed forces to fight in Korea, as well as in World War II. And, you know, they were fighting -- or so we were told -- for freedom. So that we wouldn't be overtaken by dictators and such. And so, there was a certain amount of pride in their telling of that to us, to the younger generation, as we heard it then.

And so when I became eighteen or nineteen years old, I said, "Well, I think I'll do like my uncles did." I thought this

even though I knew our own government's position -- the political position of the Mohawk Nation and of the Six Nations. "But," I said, "I will not be doing it as a part of the Six Nations or of my own Nation, but as an individual." Which I guess really isn't right, unless there are special agreements made. But the reason I was doing it was 'cause my uncles and my father and everybody did this, so it established somewhat of a tradition, I guess you might say. So I didn't think it would be too upsetting.

So I joined myself. I joined the armed forces. I went by myself into the armed forces, nobody forced me to do it, I went by myself. And I was ready to leave; I had received my orders to go to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

And an older -- or, actually, middle-aged -- man and another younger man came to see me. They had heard that I was going to be leaving for Fort Dix the next morning. It was in the winter months. And they came over to my grandmother's house and blowed the horn, and so I went out there to find out what they wanted.

So when I got into the car with them, this older guy and the young guy began to talk to me, and they said, "Why are you going to join in the U.S. armed forces for? Why? That's another country, and it's none of our business what they're doing, in fighting or anything else like that." That was when Vietnam was kinda on the front burner.

So I listened to them, and they said, "You know, you have your own leaders and your own country right here, and, if there were a need to make a war, then it is up to our government and our leaders to declare that war, or else to ally with the United States and have a special agreement between the two nations. Then we would be able to go ahead and join with them, if that were the case."

And he told me that this was not the case. So he asked me, "Why have you done this?" And he said, "You're a young Mohawk man, and you're supposed to be patriotic to your own country, not some other nation."

And so then I asked him, "Well, what about you? I mean, you want me not to go there, and I can somewhat understand your reasoning, it's logical and true and everything. But what about you. You're lecturing me not to do this. But yet you fought in the same army, and you went to Korea and you pretty near got killed over there. And as a result, you've got medals for bravery and whatever else over there.

And yet, you don't want me to do this, but yet you did it!"

Then he said, "When you're young, a lot of the time you're very foolish. You don't know how to make the right judgments. And that's what I was -- young and foolish and crazy and stupid. But now I'm older and I'm thinking about it, and that's why I'm talking to you."

And so, he talked to me for two hours. And he's the one who convinced me to make a stand. And so I refused to go. I refused to go, and I returned the uniform, and I informed the United States army that that was my position. That originally I had wanted to go, but I had become aware of who I was and what my obligation is. And it isn't to the United States.

And I said, "I have found out these things now, and that's why I come myself to return these things, and to notify you that I'm not just abandoning, and it isn't just quitting or anything. It's just that, if there is any need, for me -- as a Mohawk person -- to go to war in Vietnam or with anybody, then the President of the United States must call a meeting with all the leaders of the Mohawk Nation and the Six Nations. And they must have a discussion and make an agreement or treaty of alliance. And so, if my leaders see that there is a need to send Mohawks to Vietnam, then my leaders will inform me of that. But as of yet they have not done that. So I'm not going to leave my Chiefs and my people as I really thought, because I've thought it over now." And I pretty near went to jail.

So that's the first time I really ever had my situation, as far as belonging to the Nation is concerned, kinda polarized or crystalized for me. And now there was a need for the first time that I really had to make a decision which could mean I could have gone to jail in the United States. And I was nineteen when I first had to do that.

But that's the story of the evolution of my awareness.

**BWH:** Akwesasne seems to be divided in many ways. There are those in the community who are in favour of gambling and cigarette smuggling, and those -- like the Notes people and the Traditional Council -- who oppose it. How do you personally view these issues?

**TP:** The man that I was telling you about, the man who was responsible for my commitment to this, has now abandoned us, and is now selling our sovereignty for the dollar. The very man that got me politically aware. Yeah!



And now they want to overthrow the Chiefs' Council -- these Indian businessmen and their "warriors" or whatever you want to call them -- just for the sake of the dollar. Not for integrity, not pride, not dignity. And so many people love that dollar today -- including my people -- that I'm so ashamed.

They think I'm foolish. They think that those of us who value pride and dignity and principle and all that, are foolish.

I don't mind to fight against the United States or Canada or any other country that goes against principles of righteousness and justice in things. I *don't*. But it has to be our Longhouse government here that has to make that determination. And my loyalty to *that* is what I will hold to. And I'm not afraid to do that. But I'm not going to do it just because a few renegade people want to make money using sovereignty on false pretenses. No.

So we may get overthrown here. Because in our traditions, we [the Traditional Chiefs] are not supposed to throw mud. Our skin is supposed to be seven spans thick, so that if anybody makes fun of you or throws darts at you, or whatever, you're not supposed to retaliate, because it's not supposed to penetrate the heart. So, for the most part, we sit back when people say that we're traitors and this because we got the slot machines out of here, or because we don't want this smuggling going on.

But that's what it is -- it's smuggling. It's not sovereignty. It could be sovereignty, though; it doesn't have to be smuggling. It doesn't have to be. But it doesn't have to be smuggling the time when our Longhouse government meets with Canada and the United States, and they make a trade and commerce agreement that specifically says what will happen. Then nobody has to hide, nobody's boat has to get stuck, and nobody is jeopardizing the lives of young people. No. So I will maintain that position. No matter how unpopular it is.

This has all happened in the last three or four years. It's a brand-new element, a whole new ingredient to the thing. Before that there was this great thing that we had been building, that we had been working on for so many years, to truly unite our people together, to start prioritizing, and to start laying out the principles for *all* our people in common -- whether they're the ones who've been colonized and lost it for the ones who haven't. And now they have come and done this, and they have put a mask over all that and distorted it, so now if you wanna look at it, you will see it in a distorted way. It's sad.

BWH: Do you include the bingo stuff with that? And where do you draw the line? On some reserves people are fighting for the right to have their own bingo.

They want to use the proceeds for the community. How do you look at that issue?

TP: Okay. Well, number one, I'm gonna tell you something: bingo, or say, any kind of gambling, actually to the Iroquois is against our beliefs. But that's a moral issue. So whether I want to play bingo, morally, it's up to me. That question is an individual-based question, okay, which shouldn't be confused with the mass thing.

Now, it's a different story if our nation or community here wants to use their sovereignty to have a high-stakes bingo, such as the one you see across the road [Tom's house sits on a hill overlooking the "Mohawk Bingo Palace" on the other side of New York State Highway], then that becomes no longer an individual question. Now it becomes a question of using your sovereignty as a shield.

But if indeed the community leaders and the people have all come of one mind and said, "Okay, we want to use this type of gambling" (whether it's this big monster bingo, or whether it would be slot machines or whatever), if the leadership and the people have agreed and have come of one mind to use that as a means of economic development, and all the proceeds of that endeavour (of whatever type of gambling they have agreed to) would go back into the community, and all of the proceeds would be used in that way, and there would be no individual that would become a millionaire over it, and there would be no individual who'd have the leverage to become a high-class person -- that that kind of circumstance would not happen -- then I could see that. I would have no problem. When the question of gambling is an individual moral question then each individual would have to decide that.

But when they use the community's sovereignty for their own personal gain, then it's a different story, if you follow what I mean.

So, I am not against these things, if the procedure is followed correctly. If all the people in a certain community want to do that, then fine. If they have agreed to do it, and it's going to be for the benefit of that community, fine. It's not that way here -- that's why we're against it. But if there's a community over there that is all of one mind and are gonna do it to benefit their whole community, then let 'em do it. I will have no conflict.

Then it becomes only my moral question that I have to decide: do I want to go there, or not wanna go there? Do I wanna play that bingo or not? That's become my individual moral decision to make.

But these other business people confuse the issue all the time. □

## On this issue...

"The Psychology of Politics," is deliberately ambiguous. In naming our theme issue in this open-ended way, we hoped to draw in a wide array of articles dealing with different ways of looking at the world. The articles in this issue range from attitudes towards death and grieving, eloquently expressed in the second part of the interview with Robyn Turney on gay grief, to the new way of thinking involved in eco-feminism.

In focusing on mental attitudes, we are exploring both the psychological pain inflicted on many people seeking to change the world, as for example in the interview with a Guatemalan woman who speaks of being torn from a loved one who is "disappeared," as well as the hopeful indications of change seen in Bert Young's article on fathers and sons.

The way a changed consciousness can come about is exemplified beautifully in

an interview with Mohawk chief, Tom Porter. Other articles deal with the problems of putting ideas or attitudes into practice, as in Ron Hayley's article on anarchist strategy, Bruce Allen's discussion of the *European Nuclear Disarmament* movement at a difficult ideological crossroad, and the Nicaraguan government's treatment of indigenous people in the course of the dominant culture's revolution.

There are many other articles which might have been included on a myriad of topics, such as racism, ageism, and ableism, to name a few. We see our theme issues, far from being definitive, as opening an area of discussion or thought. We see *Kick It Over's* function as being to help us all conceive of new ways of doing politics. We hope this issue is a contribution towards that. □

## contents

<i>Indian Woman (poem)</i> . . . . .	1
<i>Interview with Tom Porter</i> . . . . .	2
<i>Coping with Gay Grief -- Part 2</i> . . . . .	4
<i>Editorial</i> . . . . .	7
<i>The Ecology Debate</i> . . . . .	7
<i>The Eco-Feminist Imperative</i> . . . . .	8
<i>Fighting the war machine in the USSR</i> . . .	10
<i>Seminar #4 (poem)</i> . . . . .	11
<i>Working for the "disappeared": interview</i> .	12
<i>Beyond the Anarchist Ghetto</i> . . . . .	14
<i>END at the Crossroads</i> . . . . .	15
<i>Robynski's Record Reviews</i> . . . . .	16
<i>On Fathering</i> . . . . .	17
<i>Nicaragua/Miskito Conflict</i> . . . . .	19
<i>In Brief</i> . . . . .	20
<i>Letters</i> . . . . .	22

## KICK IT OVER JULY 1988 NO. 21

Please do not use our US address.

Edited and published by the Kick It Over Collective. All correspondence to: KICK IT OVER, P.O. Box 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P2. Collective Members: Karl Amdur (aka Christopher Alice), Susan Brown, Alexandra Devon, Ron Hayley, Kathy Manley (wanted for moving violations in two countries), and Robyn Turney. Special thanks to Art, Steve, Lyse Boyce, Deanna Bowlby, Patrick Andrade, Catherine Tamarro, and all who volunteered their labour this issue.

**Subscriptions:** In Canada: \$7.50/4 issues. USA: \$7.50 US/4 issues. UK: 4 pounds/4 issues. (British, Canadian, or American currency only please.) Please, no postal money orders outside of North America. Bookstores keep 40% of cover price (on consignment). Reduced subscriptions available upon request; free to prisoners (including psychiatric inmates).

We are currently distributed through *Marginal*, *Doormouse* and *Flatland*. We are seeking distributors for the UK and Australia. Published four times a year. 2nd class registration #5907. ISSN 0823-6526. Indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*.

In recognition of the need for people to earn money to exist in this society, copyright is retained by artists and authors. In no way should this be interpreted as support of the concept of ownership of ideas. For those of you who borrow our stuff, please mention source as a courtesy. We are a non/anti-profit publication. Articles seldom, if ever, reflect the opinions of the entire collective. Occasionally, the opinions expressed don't represent any of us.

Items submitted for publication should be on IBM compatible computer disks (any text editor) or typed double-spaced. Articles and poems not returned unless accompanied by a SASE (use postal coupons or cash outside Canada). **DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS!** We will attempt to return quickly any computer disks sent to us. All letters subject to printing and editing, unless specifically requested otherwise. We reserve the right not to print articles or letters.

**Donations needed.** If you would like to distribute the magazine, contact us. If you are moving, or are about to be paroled, please let us know. People requesting back issues may have to wait until our next second class mailing. Financially, we're running a deficit but this is partially because we are trying to liquidate past debts. Press run 3500. Printing and camera \$900, Mailing \$600, envelopes \$60, typesetting \$40, supplies \$100: Total: \$1700. Paid advertising accepted, write for rates and terms.

Until next time -- Karl Amdur



# COPIING With GAY GRIEF

## part two: the Politics of Grief

photo by Tom Bourgeois



An interview with Robyn Turney by Glynis Sherwood

*In this, the second part of the interview continued from the last issue, Robyn Turney discusses the politics of grief, death and the meaning of life, ways to comfort the bereaved and coping strategies related to losing a lover to AIDS. This interview, picking up where it left off last issue, opens on the topic of support from friends in the Lesbian and Gay community, which paradoxically came not from the most intimate but from people in Ottawa and Toronto that Robyn "wasn't particularly close to."*

**Glynis Sherwood:** Did you feel a lack of support from both Gay and straight people, or did you find there was a difference?

**Robyn Turney:** I'm only thinking of my closest Gay friends at the moment, but

then you have to remember, all of my closest Lesbian and Gay friends are assimilated.

**GS:** What do you mean by that?

**RT:** I mean that even though they belong to a minority rejected by the system, they nevertheless want to look acceptable to the system and find themselves a comfortable place in it. We have a hard time relating to each other at the best of times because our world views, our politics, are completely polarized. Now political differences -- being outside the domain of intimacy -- don't enter directly into our friendships. Mostly we just agree to disagree. But I felt that the kind of support they were offering me was highly coloured by their approach to life. For example, each one of them had their own "miracle cure" for overcoming grief when most of them had not been through the same kind of experience I had been through or had, in particular, lost anyone close to them to AIDS.

One individual unceasingly recommended to me to keep busy, to seek employment, that perpetual activity was the most effective way to deal with a loss, to the point

where I felt so irritated and alienated that I just wanted to scream! I didn't want to keep busy. I wanted to face my loss. Even had I wanted to, I couldn't have taken that advice. I was totally incapable of concentrating on anything. I felt utterly debilitated, as much as I would have been were I were a victim of paraplegia. I was drowning and suffocating in my grief. I thought I was going insane. And this person expected me to keep busy?!

**GS:** In other words, you didn't want to be distracted from your feelings, you wanted to deal with your feelings?

**RT:** That's right! This individual didn't seem to understand that the whole reason I left my job back in 1986 was because the effects of Bob's terminal illness had completely destroyed my powers of concentration, made it impossible for me to get anything done and caused me to be overtly emotional, crying openly at work

in front of people, and so forth. You might as well have asked a wheelchair bound person to get up and walk as have asked me to keep busy as a remedy for grief.

This individual said to me, "Well, if it were me, I'd keep busy." But this was precisely my point, and I had to indicate clearly to my friends that while these things might work for them, they weren't necessarily going to work for me. We're individuals, after all, and we all differ, so you can't write the same prescription for everybody.

The whole idea that I should be doing something other than dealing with my grief was a great strain on me, to the point where I felt alienated from or sometimes even enmity for the people who had hitherto been my closest friends, and in some cases, quite frankly, things between us will never be the same.

### The Politics of Grief

**GS:** What do you believe were the underlying issues that prevented these people from extending themselves to you in a more constructive manner? What's your analysis around that?

**RT:** Well, now we're getting into what I call "the politics of grief". Oddly enough, I'd always thought that, despite our political differences, my closest Lesbian and Gay friends would ultimately have been there when I needed them, but I learned with a rather rude shock that the personal is political in terms of their approach to my bereavement. A lot of weight was lent to this conclusion a little later on in my bereavement when my friends started to offer another variety of advice. I was told that I should be putting Bob's death behind me and getting on with life, that I should be pulling myself up by my own bootstraps and stop all this unproductive whining and moaning.

For example, I once tried to illustrate my feelings of helplessness to a friend by way of analogy with a tiny ship caught in a violent storm. His response was, seeing that smaller ships are so much more navigable than larger ones, I should steer my little boat between the waves and safely into port! My attempts to demonstrate how grief had crippled me were lost on this man. Another friend wanted to know why I just didn't get another lover. It occurred to me then that this whole mentality is the very sort that operates in individuals who accept the status quo.

The principle operating in their approach to grief is the same one that is evident in the conservative mind set, which thinks, for example, that people on social assistance wouldn't be "parasitically" dependent on the state if only they would pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. If these "welfare bums" would only do this then they wouldn't be poor, they wouldn't be on the dole, they wouldn't be suffering and they wouldn't be starving. And this was the same sort of reception that I felt I was getting from my closest friends. "If only you'd pull yourself up by your own bootstraps you'd conquer this grief thing, put it behind you and you wouldn't be unhappy." To be fair no one actually used these words, but that this was the impression I was left with.

The implication, of course, is that we create our own unhappiness.

I do realize that there are mitigating circumstances operating here. For example, politics aside, most of my friends have not had an experience analogous to mine and consequently they don't want to face things that remind them of their own mortality or that of their loved ones. That probably contributed to their heavy-handed approaches. As a consequence, I don't think that lacking a realistic approach to one's own mortality and that of others is a healthy attitude to have.

**GS:** It seems to be endemic in society. We are not brought up to deal with the issue of death in a very constructive manner or, for that matter, at all. So consequently the onus would rest with the individual to get over this experience.

**RT:** It would appear so. I had this idyllic fantasy that, when Bob died, all my friends would gather round me and embrace me, that there would be a lot of physical and emotional contact, that they would permit me to express my grief and talk about it openly in any manner that I desired, and not offer me meaningless if well-intentioned clichés and platitudes. The reality of their response, however, was as radically different from the way I envisioned it as was Bob's death. I didn't expect to hear the voice of capitalist patriarchy speaking through them.

On the other side of the political coin, some socially conscious individuals operating from a leftist perspective would point out to me that there are oppressed and Third World peoples all over the planet for whom death is an everyday part of the struggle for liberation. It's a fact of life for them and they don't have the luxury of grieving in the same way people in Western developed countries do, in the way that I am grieving. These people don't have the privilege of hanging on to the death of a loved one for a year or more, of moaning and groaning about it for that length of time, of permitting the loss to totally debilitate them. Life for them is a constant struggle and they are forced by circumstances to just forget their losses and go doggedly on.

At first this had a profound impact on me. It did sound to me like I was being a crybaby in comparison to impoverished, oppressed peoples the world over. It struck far closer to the mark than anything my assimilated friends had said to me because this is where I myself am coming from, this bears directly upon my ideology.

On giving the matter more thought, however, while I agree that compared to oppressed and Third World peoples, I have it easy, and while yes, death for them is an every day fact of life, I'd like to add that they aren't just fighting for food and for peace, for autonomy and the right to self-government. They are fighting for other highly significant goals as well. Because you can't just feed the body, you have to feed the mind and the heart, too. No doubt, in the list of the things they are fighting for, one would have to include the right to grieve for their loved ones in a healthy, holistic, consummate and mature manner rather than in a fragmentary, distorted and repressive way. Surely inhibiting grief, instead of expressing it and working it through, cannot be healthy, especially when the latter has been denied you. Doubtless grief is something to be reclaimed as rightfully ours, as something denied to individuals by political and social oppression, by wars and starvation, by poverty and privation. Certainly the right to grieve is a basic humyn right, a right to be denied to no humyn being, a right as noble and as self-liberating and as worthy to work for as any other. Like the song says, "Hearts starve as well as



bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!" That was my response to those who feel that the process of bereavement is nothing more than a bourgeois luxury.

GS: That outlook is in itself a classic Marxist kind of platitude. It is an example of overgeneralizing an abstract idea to the point of absurdity and denying subjective shared experience. It is also a form of reverse chauvinism to say that Third World people have a monopoly on humyn rights such as the right to grieve. As a Gay person it could certainly be construed that you are a member of an oppressed group fighting for some of the same basic rights as Third World people.

RT: Hopefully, in the Libertarian-Communist society, people will be able to reclaim everything they had lost during the years of struggle, socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically, including things like the right to love and the right to grieve.

#### Death and the Meaning of Life

GS: How do you think this experience has changed the way you look at yourself with regards to your world-view in day-to-day life?

RT: It hasn't changed my way of thinking at all. My *weltanschauung* was pessimistic and profoundly existential to begin with and remains the same. The presence of AIDS in the world and Bob's suffering and untimely death have, if anything, only served to reconfirm it.

GS: What does existentialism mean to you specifically?

RT: I've always found in the nihilism and pessimism of existentialist thought a sort of secular Gnosticism which quite appeals to me, holding that each humyn being exists as an individual in a universe which, if not inimical, is void of rational direction or purpose at the very least. Existence is rendered meaningless by the reality of death, the inevitability of that same non-existence which preceded our birth, the only aspect of being of which we can be absolutely certain, and it is in the face of this depressing realization that we must forge out our daily lives. You can see, then, why, although personally catastrophic, Bob's suffering and death came as no surprise to me. How could they? What else have I to expect from this fucking world?

Existence is basic: it is the fact of the individual's presence and participation in a changing and potentially dangerous world, and we must oppose our hostile environment through the exercise of our free will. I feel closest to the school of existentialism that decrees it impossible for us to transcend our own subjectivity, and teaches that authentic existence consists of preserving our own personal identity which is threatened with erosion by deceptions, under the influence and demands of society.

This was the very essence of Bob's view of life, and he wholeheartedly embraced it on an emotional level as I do on an intellectual level. This is what made him my soulmate.

It was this outlook which initially prompted me to court the political left, because I saw in activism a means of harnessing my free will to battle an inimical environment, and eventually it led me to embrace Anarchism.

Bob was an Anarchist when I met him and he was instrumental in my adoption of the Libertarian viewpoint. Thus, one aspect of my bereavement is the feeling of having lost the person to whom I owe that introduction. That disturbs me profoundly because that's a void in my life that I just can't fill. But, as I was saying, losing Bob hasn't changed my existential outlook on life. It merely con-

firmed what I have believed all along.

GS: At present, what would you say is your perspective on death and, in particular, suffering, having gone through this experience first hand?

RT: Most commonly there is a slide toward religion in people who've endured a loss, but not in my case. Perhaps that would have happened had I been anything of an optimist, but I'm not. It's caused me to recall religious matters, but, since they've been at the back of my mind all my life, it's not like experiencing anything new.

Some people look upon death as the ultimate evil, "the last enemy Christ would destroy", etc. I don't. I see death as a part of life, as an inevitability. So it's not Bob's death that has affected me so profoundly, it's the awful suffering he endured. My experience of this has only served to make me dig my existentialist heels into the ground even harder, for it provides me with invincible proof that we live in a universe that is indifferent and/or inimical to us. I feel utterly the meaninglessness and absurdity of life, an absurdity not to be laughed at but to be despaired.

GS: Are you saying that you think suffering is absolutely pointless and meaningless?

RT: Yes, I am! Nothing pisses me off more than the Christian platitude that out of suffering comes greater good. I don't believe that. I believe that out of suffering comes greater evil. I think that like breeds like; the end does not justify the means, the end is the means and the means is the end.

Few things rouse my ire more than to hear people saying what a boon AIDS was to the Gay community, because Gay men are acting less superficially and are finally getting to know one another before embarking on intimate relationships! Who says that they weren't getting to know one another before the advent of AIDS? This attitude is just a subterfuge for those who feel that there is something wrong with recreational sex for its own sake. These again are the sorts of vile platitudes...

GS: That reflect a punitive attitude?

RT: Yes, a punitive attitude that good things are coming out of all this. What they're really saying is that a return to traditional morality is desirable, a morality to which I am most unalterably opposed. I don't think that viewing AIDS as a good thing and recreational sex as a bad thing is a healthy attitude. Recreational sex is an absolute good and AIDS is the absolute evil, and it's destroying my people and my community.

I am equally incensed at those who feel that good can come out of my individual suffering having lost Bob. I don't perceive any good coming out of it whatsoever. It's not a loss that I'll ever fully recover from. Life was bad enough before and I certainly didn't need Bob's suffering and death to augment my individual agony, but, then again, perhaps because of my *weltanschauung* I'm biased that way. I don't look on the world as a good place and it's next to impossible for me to relate to people that do.

GS: What about your own personal feelings? Do you believe you are more in touch with that aspect of yourself? If so, how have these new insights manifested themselves?

RT: I think that I'm more in touch with my feelings now than I've ever been before. I am so simply because Bob is no longer around to share my feelings with me. The only person I can turn to is myself.

GS: Don't you think that there can be any sort of middle road (not meaning middle-of-the-road), where some life experien-

ces, although not filled with happiness, can be instructive or may teach you something -- even though an AIDS related death is a very harsh example of that?

RT: I'm not saying that I haven't learned anything. My response to that is I think that there are better and more constructive ways of learning things than learning them the hard way.

Once again, ends are means and means are ends. To say that the end justifies the means is to vindicate suffering, to make it appear as something desirable in the educational process. Anarchists have long inveighed against this Jesuitical formula. We don't need to experience suffering to know what pain is like any more than we need experience starvation to know what hunger is. Someone who never makes mistakes in mathematics knows very well what a mistake is without, nevertheless, ever having made one. We don't need to learn things the hard way in order to learn.

GS: In other words, the smack-in-the-head school of thought has not been a welcome or instructive teacher?

RT: No, definitely not. Now Bob had his own perspective on all these things. He and I often discussed the meaning of death toward the end of his life. In January of '86 when he had his last bout with PCP, Bob was quite sure that death was a part of life, and it was a frequent topic of conversation in his hospital room. Bob had always been an agnostic and while he always emphatically and vehemently denied the existence of a deity until his final hour, he told me that January that he either believed or would like to believe that death wasn't the end. He found the concept of metempsychosis to be quite attractive.

GS: Meaning the transmigration of souls?

RT: Yes. It's not quite the same as reincarnation. A lot of people aren't aware that there's a difference, just as a lot of people don't realize that a belief in life beyond death doesn't necessarily have to include belief in a deity.

Reincarnation refers exclusively to incarnation into humyn bodies. Transmigration or metempsychosis includes both humyn and animal bodies.

Bob's desire, were he able to return to this world, was to come back in the form of some bright and beautiful insect, a wish that expressed profoundly his intense love for ecology and the environment, and his hatred for urban industrial "civilization" for destroying the latter. Bob was very much a green Anarchist. He often commented, when he would point out to me new grass erupting

from cracks in the sidewalk, that nature was recapturing the earth stolen by humyn technology. This sort of thing pleased him very much, at least as much as the threat of nuclear war disturbed him. To become part of the eco-system was the most pleasant thing he could hope for.

Now I myself do not subscribe to any vision of life after death. If, indeed there is anything to it, I most emphatically do not want to return to this world of pain after I die. Nevertheless, I love Bob enough to hope for his sake that his wish in some sense will be fulfilled.

GS: That there is something awaiting Bob beyond his physical death.

RT: Yes. I think he'd be much happier being part of the eco-system itself rather than a member of the species that is laying the eco-system to waste. Neither Bob's wish, however, nor his suffering, nor his death has altered my perspective on supernaturalism. Far from converting me, Bob's fate has only served to reignite for me what is termed in theology "the problem of evil", for which no satisfactory answer has ever been given. Certainly, Christianity has never effectively handled this question while the modern alternative religions, in their ignorance and naive optimism, don't even address the issue at all. Or, if they do, they invariably lay responsibility for suffering at the feet of humyn beings, never at those of their gods. Evil is viewed either as a consequence of free will -- a very old cop-out -- or else as serving a pedagogic purpose -- a contention I've already refuted. That smells to me a whole hell of a lot like the Judaeo-Christian version of the Fall wearing New Age deodorant. The New Age gods are all goodness and niceness, effecting a similar administration over a





universe of the same character. According to the "Deep Ecologists", or, to describe them more accurately, the Eco-Fascists or Eco-Nazis, the gods even extend their saccharine jurisdiction to include microorganisms like the AIDS virus which, according to them, has as much right to exist as we do, to pollute our bodies, rot our brains, destroy our immune systems and wring from us the most excruciating demise an humyn being can experience, and the gods would surely consider us murderers if we tried to kill the damned thing. Well, fuck that noise. I am completely contemptuous of them and their beliefs. Personally, I could never forgive a deity for permitting all the suffering I see in the world, much less for taking Bob from me, or adhere to religions whose explanations fail to satisfy my reason.

If effects are known by their causes, if ends by their means, if cosmology, teleology and phenomenology are accurate theological landmarks, then the only logical conclusion is that we have, not a problem of limited evil in an universe of infinite good, but a problem of minimal good in a world of infinite evil. I can put it to you in a few words: I could certainly be persuaded that no supreme being or deity of any sort exists; I might possibly be persuaded -- like the classical and modern Manichaeans -- that there exists a malign divinity; but no amount of empirical or *a priori* argument could ever persuade me to believe that the universe is the product of a good Goddess or God. And if I ever find myself wavering between the first two alternatives, it is at my times of greatest despondency, when I am most vulnerable, when I look at things like AIDS and the horrible suffering it engenders and begin to wonder if there isn't more evil in the world that can possibly be naturally and humynly accounted for, and conclude that since I see only infamy on earth, it can only be an Evil Being unworthy of our worship who has created all that surrounds us. Either atheism or this system: good sense sees no middle way!

Bob reminded me of an innocent, naive, inquiring and very sensitive child who would have been much better suited to some future post-revolutionary epoch when we have set all the wrongs of this age aright, a child brutalized and burned by the callous, unfeeling world which, like some victimizing, sadistic parent, crushed all his hopes, shattered his dreams, and, never failing to do him a cruel turn at every conceivable opportunity, ultimately destroyed him. This image of him, which still haunts me, just made me want to rush to him, pick him up in my arms and say, "There, there, Bob, everything's going to be all right", simultaneously shielding him from the blows.

The "advantage", if you can call it that, of capitulating to the Manichaean hypothesis is the target that it provides when I look for someone or something to blame for losing Bob, and it serves as a focus for my rage and my hatred. I certainly cannot blame Bob, and I've never been able to understand why so very often bereaved people blame their loved ones for dying, as if it were really their fault, as if they had a choice in the matter. I love Bob far too much to ever be angry with him for dying. I still don't know why others in my position do so.

GS: It may go back to classic feelings of abandonment, that people may have experienced in childhood and that they have not recovered from.

RT: It seems that everyone in my bereavement group has felt way that except for me. I am far too Manichaean in temperament and existential in outlook to ever blame Bob or be at all angry with

him. He was a victim of the powers that be; it's "their" fault, not his.

### Ways to Comfort

GS: Given that outlook, what do you feel are the most helpful things that people can do for somebody who's going through an intense grieving experience?

RT: My prescription contains more "don'ts" than "dos", simply because I got so many responses from people that only made the whole situation worse.

What you never do is offer a grieving person platitudes. Even if it is true that at some future time things will get better, that's not part of their reality right after they've lost a loved one. From their perspective, things will never get any better. Instead, acknowledge their loss. Let them know that their feelings are both real and valid, and allow them the freedom to feel whatsoever they want to feel.

Crying and fits of anger should be allowed free reign. Comfort them in their rage and grief. Don't forget the importance of physical and emotional contact. Hug them and tell them that you love them.

Don't ply them for details concerning the death. I remember all too well the agony of having to itemize the circumstances of Bob's death to inquiring friends over and over again. The bereaved will let you know in their own time whatever details they want to proffer.

sible. At the very most you should say, "If I were in your position, I would do this or that." That doesn't put any pressure on the person to accept it. Do this only if it appears that the bereaved is really soliciting that sort of advice from you. Don't offer any miracle solutions or sure-fire cures for grief.

Don't try to force the bereaved to become active or social until they're ready to. If they're unemployed, don't try to encourage them to find work until they feel ready to do so, no matter how long it takes. They may not be able to work for as much as a year after the death. If they are totally debilitated by grief, they are in no condition to seek employment.

Most of all, let the individual go through the stages of grief at their own speed. I would also recommend that the friend who wants to comfort the bereaved acquaint themselves with some of the available published material on grief, to facilitate understanding if nothing else, although there's next to nothing available on Gay grief. Also, in terms of recovering from grief, don't expect miracles; the person will come around in their own time and in their own way. These are the sorts of things that I would have found very helpful after Bob died.

### Coping Strategies

GS: In conclusion, I want to ask you what advice you would give to people who have lost a loved one, in terms of coping,



photo by Tom Bourgeois

Be continuously available to the person should they want to contact you at any time of the day or night, even if they never take advantage of this. Grief can strike at the most unexpected times and, if you're at your wit's end, it's very helpful to know that there's someone you can talk to if need be.

Whatever you do, don't give advice. If you have your own particular way of dealing with grief, or even if you yourself have lost a loved one and you've dealt with it in a certain way, don't automatically assume that your mode of dealing with grief will work for everybody else or anybody else. Everyone's experience of grief is slightly different, thus analogies are inexact and generalizations impos-

finding support and strength to continue so that they may one day work through the other side of the grief experience?

RT: The best thing they could possibly do is to join a bereavement group. If there's none available, you might even try starting one with others whom you know have endured similar losses. I can briefly highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages of the group that I belong to. My bereavement group has helped me an awful lot in terms of the loss itself, because the key factor in grieving is empathy and we all share our loss in common, whatever our individual differences. The other people in the group have been there; they know what it's like.

I certainly have experienced much more warmth there than I have with any of my close friends. It's a value-judgement free atmosphere: no one ever tells you what you should or shouldn't be doing. It's completely unstructured; the facilitators might interject now and then, but each individual can say as much or as little or even nothing at all as they desire. Grief and rage can be expressed openly there, and you can count on everyone to support you. Now the disadvantages may be due purely to my individual idiosyncrasies, but chief among them I find that while there is empathy it can only go as far as the loss we all share. You see most of the people in my bereavement group are assimilated and have middle-class values. I'm the only Communist-Anarchist in the bunch (although there is one socialist). And I find that we can relate to each other's losses well enough, but to no other aspect in our lives. And I find that I need the empathy of like-minded individuals who share my values to work through all the aspects of losing Bob. Now although a bereavement group may not be an ideal solution, it's certainly better than any other currently available venue.

If you're grieving, no matter what outside resources that you've chosen to help you cope, when it comes to dealing with yourself, be gentle. It might be a long time before the worst is over and in some sense you will never stop grieving. It takes at least a year. So don't expect to accomplish this process overnight.

You should also allow yourself to express all your feelings and not hold any of them back or think that doing so is a good thing. Repressed, they do more harm than good.

Above all, never force yourself to do anything that you don't want to do, even when it comes in the form of well-intentioned promptings and suggestions from other people. Listen to your intuition. For a while, whether you like it or not, your emotions are going to be the drivers and your reason and intellect the riders instead of the other way around. Roll with the punches. It's a rough ride.

GS: Do you think that the grieving person needs to have faith that this trauma will one day pass?

RT: The worst will pass, but that there are some things which will take a longer time to work through than others. What you will find eventually, after the numbing, amorphous blur of initial shock has lifted, after that point where everything about your loss bothers you, then, as the months go on, you will obtain a progressively sharper focus on those aspects of your loss which bother you most and which will require the most time to work through.

It may well be, as in my case, that there are really only one or two aspects of the death that you feel that you just can't get over. With me, it's guilt and the inability to replace Bob's influence in my life. When all else dissipated, those two things remained. Those are the two most difficult issues I have to deal with. But, in a way, you'll find that it's a blessing to have those issues finally isolated, those places where you're fixated, because you'll know just exactly what you've got to deal with and what you're up against. Nothing is worse in the initial stages of grief than the absolute nebulosity of the pain.

I don't know how I'm going to deal with these issues of fixation myself. I guess I'll have to tackle them on my own as best I can. But at least they are defined. These are the things that are going to have to be worked through one at a time. I can only tell you what my experience has been thus far and hope that it will be of some help. □



# Editorial

by Karl Amdur on behalf of Kick It Over

The Survival Gathering has made the press. The **Toronto Sun** has informed the general public all about what to expect. The results are interesting:

"...an estimated 15,000 anarchists [are] expected to converge on Metro next month. Organizers say white supremacists, neo-Nazis, punk rockers and activist groups from around the world are expected to attend the July 1-4 Survival Gathering" -- "an annual bash-and-trash festival" with "the 519 Church St. Community Centre -- Toronto's traditional land of the weird and home of the hopeless -- as the headquarters for their annual weekend to promote mass disorder and confusion."

"'We're treating this very seriously,' said Metro Police Staff Supt. Bernie Nadeau."

"Politicians say they're also worried and would like to see it stopped."

"Amos [Metro Police Sgt. Brian Amos] said no permit has been issued for the event. 'These guys are coming here to try to embarrass the establishment and to attempt to tie up every officer in the city.'"

"Amos said police are expecting some violence."

"Metro councillor Derwyn Shea said he's concerned about the safety of citizens during Canada Day celebrations in High Park. 'I'd like to see this event prevented from happening,' Shea said. 'These people would do anything to defy the law.'"

"Anarchists will spend July 4 in High Park putting 'theory into practice'"

"The invasion -- which features workshops on bizarre topics ranging from home-brewed beer and squatting to something called 'queer anarchists' -- is creating unprecedented fear and loathing among city politicians."

"Executive Alderman Tony O'Donohue and Chris Korwin-Kuczynski said yesterday that if the anarchists go bonkers, they'll land on 519 officials like 10 tonnes of manure."

"...Nobody really knows what to expect. But anarchists sure won't be seeking a permit to use High Park for their outdoor demonstrations. Begging for government sanction isn't their strong suit."

Other pieces of information include:

"'This will be a big one,' an event organizer said. 'We expect all kinds of people and who knows what will happen.'"

"...No anarchist worth his homemade stink bomb and punker haircut would be caught dead lugging around an official itinerary..."

"...Two female anarchists were busted for indecent exposure for baring their breasts in a successful bid to disrupt traffic."

"'They're strange, strange people,' Dreis said [police officer Dan Dreis -- it is insinuated that he is from Minneapolis]."

These quotes are compilations from three articles printed in the **Toronto Sun**. One of the three was used as an insert for an article on the Toronto Summit, i.e., linking together this gathering and the Summit, even though they take place at different times.

There was a time, not so long ago when the US government, with co-operation from the media, murdered several anarchists after show trials in rigged courtrooms. To be a bit more legalistic about it, the United States government, with co-operation from the US media, did knowingly, with due malice and prior planning, deliberately subvert the court system so that people whose guilt was not established, and who in some cases the US government were sure were innocent, were declared guilty in a court of law, and then executed. [This refers to Sacco and Vanzetti and the Haymarket defendants.]

The **Toronto Sun** would have been part of the complicit media if they had been publishing in the States at the time. Their actions with regard to the Survival Gathering show that they have little, if any, concern for the truth. In their descriptions they stretched the truth, took items out of context, claimed they talked to people whom they did not, fabricated information, and produced outright lies. Perhaps the **Toronto Sun** is lucky in that Survival Gathering anarchists do not believe in engaging in court action as it is tacitly supporting the state. There is no question that the **Toronto Sun** has printed dis-information that is libelous and slanderous. Given that there is also an attempt to limit the rights of anarchists to engage in political activity by spreading such information, more serious criminal charges could possibly be laid.

Perhaps a bit of history about the **Toronto Sun** is in order. They are being boycotted for being sexist, racist, homophobic, and undoubtedly for other reasons as well. The **Sun** is the *Delta Mirror* of the Toronto print media. The main purpose of the articles is not to convey news or information, but to be entertaining. On the third page of the **Toronto Sun** is the "Sunshine Girl", a young woman wearing a revealing bathing suit with shaved pubic hair.

One cannot expect such professionalism from **Toronto Sun** reporters as to learn something about anarchism before they write about it. I'm sure that they're quite upset about women going topless; if women reclaim their breasts, it will be that much harder to package and sell their bodies.

If the **Toronto Sun** didn't have the correct information to work with, one could only accuse them of gross professional incompetence, but this incident goes further. In the Ted Welch article, the actual number of demonstrators is listed as 700 last year (which is roughly what Minneapolis organizers say were present), making clear the ludicrousness of claims that 15,000 anarchists are coming to terrorize Toronto. In terms of how much of a terror to society anarchists are, the police officer we are led to assume is from Minneapolis, says "They're a pain all right. But it was no big deal. They're nothing to worry about. Nobody around here cared." These items were tucked in at the end of the Ted Welch piece, and not present in the other articles. Instead we have the anarchists in High Park on Canada Day and out to terrorize the good citizens of Toronto, on July 4th -- 15,000 of them out to create "anarchy" and mayhem. Not only that, but somehow all of this is connected to the leaders' summit taking place at a different time [for people outside of Canada, *Canada Day* is July 1st].

Admittedly, they at no point claim anything about us except that we are neo-Nazis and white supremacists, so perhaps they do not know who we are. To claim that we are neo-Nazis is equivalent to saying that the editors of the **Toronto Sun** are child-molesters, communists, and drug users, with the exception that some of those claims are possible, while it is *not* possible for anarchists to be Nazis and white supremacists. These concepts are diametrically opposed to anarchist theory.

It's not that the **Toronto Sun** didn't know the facts, they didn't care. Facts in Nazi Germany just got into the way. You said whatever was necessary to create emotional hysteria to allow persecution of dissident groups, to create a climate favourable to police crackdown on the population at large. This is what the **Toronto Sun** is doing on a small scale. One would like to think that, in reality, the **Toronto Sun** only cared about money, and was willing to do anything to get it. Unfortunately with their sexist, racist, homophobic, anti-union, anti-free speech slant, etc., one must expect something even more sinister from them.

What do anarchists want anyway? A very astute police officer in Chicago stated it very succinctly to a woman watching an anarchist demonstration: "They want everything, and nothing." □

# The Ecology Debate

In December 1986, **Kick It Over** (#17) published an interview with Kirkpatrick Sale in which he argued that the philosophical currents in the Green and ecology movements differed only in the names conferred on them by their founders -- on all essentials they were in unanimity. We challenged him on this by publishing an excerpt from an interview with *Earth First!* spokesman, Dave Foreman, from the Australian publication, *Simply Living*, where Foreman argued that Ethiopians should be allowed to die of hunger, and Mexican and Central American immigrants should be barred from the United States, in the name of "nature finding its own balance" and "protecting U.S. resources."

These statements, which were widely reproduced, and others by *Earth First!* columnist "Miss Ann Thropy" on the desirability of the AIDS epidemic, helped precipitate a major debate in the ecology movement, beginning at the 1987 national Green Conference in Amherst, Massachusetts. At that conference, Greens from Burlington, Vermont circulated two essays, "Social Ecology vs. 'Deep Ecology'" by Murray Bookchin and "Eco-Feminism and Deep Ecology: Unresolvable Conflict?" by Janet Biehl, both of which were reproduced under new titles in the Winter 1987 issue of **Kick It Over** (#20). These, in turn, provoked responses from the deep ecologists in the pages of *Earth First!* (see "Of Old Wine in New Bottles" in the November 1, 1987 issue, and "Deep Ecology and Its Critics" in the December 22, 1987 issue -- write to: *Earth First!*, P.O.

Box 5871, Tucson, Arizona 85703; send \$2.50 U.S. per issue).

Bookchin, in turn, replied with an article, "Yes! Whither Earth First!" (available for \$2.00 U.S. from: *Green Perspectives*, P.O. Box 111, Burlington, Vermont 05402), and he and his associates have continued to publish material on the subject.

Another notable contribution, which appeared in the fall of 1987, was a special issue of *The Fifth Estate* entitled "How Deep Is Deep Ecology?" by George Bradford. While sharing many of the criticisms of the deep ecologists made by Murray Bookchin, Bradford took care to distance himself somewhat from the social ecology position. Their Spring 1988 issue featured more on the subject (send \$1.50 U.S. per issue to: FE, Box 02548, Detroit, Michigan 48202). Since then, the debate has spilled over into the pages of the *Utne Reader* (between Edward Abbey and Murray Bookchin) and the *Nation* (Kirkpatrick Sale and Charlene Spretnak vs. Ynestra King and others).

Having helped to spark this whole thing, **Kick It Over** is still interested in receiving responses to Bookchin and Biehl's essays from deep ecologists, and will make space available in future issues.

**Kick It Over** regrets that, in our pasting up of Murray Bookchin's article, a major transposition occurred on page 7A of the "Special Supplement". Lines 26-79 in column 2 should not be there (in other words, line 80 -- "be it for different purposes than Cat" -- continues the sentence contained in line 25 -- "mid-sixties writings on social ecology, al-"). Likewise, line 41 in column 3 ("vast numbers of Irish peasants to starve to") is a continuation of the last line of this section ("of Malthusian pap, deliberately permitted"). Our apologies to the author and to our readers for this mistake.

We also apologize for the lateness of this issue, and hope to have the next one out sooner. Several months ago, we received a cheque for a subscription, but no return address. Someone out there has paid for four issues, and is not going to be receiving them. If you are that person, please send us your address.

We still have copies available of **Kick It Over**, numbers 5-6, 8-14, and 16-20 (see issues #20 and #18 for back issue contents). *Single back issues are \$2.00. A bundle of all available back issues can be had for \$15.00.* Thanks. □





At Ashbridges Bay, Toronto, sewage sludge is burnt, releasing dioxin, lead, and other heavy metals into the atmosphere. photo by J. Sells

# Making the Great Lakes HOME

## The Eco-feminist Imperative

by Jennifer Sells

The following article was presented as an address at the *Mobilization to Save the Great Lakes Conference in Detroit, Michigan* on May 13, 1988.

The pollution of the Great Lakes has taught us some basic lessons about ecology. In the migration of toxic materials through the Great Lakes system we have been forced to understand that, regardless of national and state boundaries, we are all members of one ecological community and that we are dependant on the environment for our well-being. For those of us living on the shores of the waters in the Great Lakes system, we are beginning to recognize that we are all drinking from the same cup and that that cup is being poisoned; it is not only human life but all life on the shores, in the water, and in the air which is affected. I am not going to give details about the amounts of various chemicals being pumped or leaching into the lakes. What I would like to talk about is mental pollution -- the way of thinking which has led us to treat our environment in a way which threatens to destroy it. What I'd also like to suggest is that we need to consider some new ways of thinking. Rather than responding to each new crisis, we need to ask some fundamental questions about the way our culture operates and what its basic assumptions are. The ecology movement and the feminist movements both have started us asking some critical questions. The combination of the two perspectives in eco-feminism is what I will explore in this article.

Before I look at eco-feminism, I'd like to tell you some little known facts about the early history of ecology. The term "ecology" was invented by Ernst Haeckel, a German zoologist, in 1866. He chose the Latin term "oikos", which means household, and put a prefix in front of it to create a term which meant the "household of all" or the environment. However he didn't develop ecology as a science. In 1892, an American woman named Ellen Swallow, who was the first female science graduate in the United States, took it upon herself to develop an environmental science which she called "ecology". Swallow was interested in creating a science which would "teach people how to live in their environment", which she saw as being the "household" which we share with other living things.

She saw a great need for such an environmental science because it was quite evident by the 1890's that people were having a very destructive effect on the land, water and the air. Ellen Swallow's vision of ecology was that of an environmental science which would combine chemistry, biology, physics, health, education and sanitary engineering. However her approach was several decades ahead of its time. As the 19th century drew to a close, the life sciences reclaimed the term "ecology" as being a branch of biology dealing strictly with the relationship of non-human animals and plants to their environment. We can only speculate on what might have happened had Swallow's vision been accepted almost one hundred years ago. Her holistic and practical approach might have helped us to recognize the dependence of our well-being on that of our environment.

When the ecology and feminist movements experienced a rebirth at the end of the 1960's, it was not immediately apparent to most members of either group what they might have in common. Ecological activists were concerned with the treatment of the natural world; feminists with the oppression of women. But some feminist writers were starting to make connections between the oppression of women and that of nature, connections which would form the basis of eco-feminism. However, twenty years later, eco-feminism is still not fully accepted in either the feminist or ecology movements. I'd like to put forward some arguments as to why the ecology and feminist movements need each other and why I think eco-feminism is a necessary bridge.

There are a few principles which are basic to understanding eco-feminism. A starting point for eco-feminists is the observation that women have long been identified with nature. You see this in descriptions like "mother nature", "mother earth", terms like "virgin" forest, the "rape" of the earth, and, until recently, the naming of hurricanes after women. A second observation is that, in Western European cultures (as well as in many other cultures), nature is put down and women along with it. In an essay called "Is female to male as nature is to culture?", anthropologist Sherry Ortner puts forward the theory that one reason women in almost all cultures are given lower status is because of their associa-

tion with nature, which is almost universally devalued.

A third observation which is important to an understanding of eco-feminism is that our culture tends to see things in polarized and hierarchical ways. Examples of this include seeing nature as being separate from and inferior to culture and seeing women as inherently different from and inferior to men. This hierarchical world view leads to a mentality which justifies the domination of one group of people by another or people's domination of the natural world. Eco-feminists reject this way of thinking and see it as a major problem with Western European culture. With these points in mind, let me begin by exploring what distinguishes eco-feminism from other kinds of feminism.

There is nothing inherently ecological in feminism, which is not to say that an ecological worldview cannot evolve out of feminism. But one can be a feminist and see nothing wrong with the destruction of the natural world. Liberal feminists and Marxist feminists, trying for full legal and economic integration into either the capitalist or socialist systems, take for granted those systems' exploitation of the natural world. For example, liberal feminists who focus on getting equal representation for women in the hierarchical structures of corporations and governments, don't challenge the idea of hierarchy and the plundering of nature for profit. In a similar way Marxist feminists do not challenge the hierarchical structures which are inherent in the establishment of any state, nor do they challenge an economic development model which sees the natural world as mere raw material for satisfying human needs. In trying to change women's position vis-a-vis men, there has been a tendency to focus on entrenched male privilege or the need for institutional change, important though these are, while ignoring underlying hierarchical and anti-nature attitudes.

Eco-feminists looking at the history of Western culture have noticed that the themes of the domination of women and nature go back a long way. In her book, *The Death of Nature*, Carolyn Merchant describes how, under the impetus of the scientific revolution, nature changed from being regarded as sacred to being mere matter, and how this was paralleled by an increase in the persecution of

women, as in the witchhunts.

This association of women and nature has been a standard feature of Western culture. How have feminists responded to this charge that they are closer to nature? While feminists have either accepted or rejected this claim, they have not often challenged this dualistic way of thinking. For example, early radical feminist writer Shulamith Firestone, in *The Dialectic of Sex*, asserts that women need to be freed from the burden of biological motherhood. She feels that, since women's association with nature has been a grounds for oppressing them, women should try to sever this connection. In fact, she talks quite explicitly about the desirability of developing a way of gestating babies outside of women's bodies. It is obvious from this statement that she is not critical of the tendency of this society to separate culture from nature, nor does she challenge its assumed right to *dominate* nature.

Other feminists -- for example, certain "spiritual" or "cultural" feminists -- have accepted the charge that women are closer to nature. In so doing, they turn the value system upside down and claim that because women are supposed to be closer to nature they are superior. They claim that, because of their biological capabilities as mothers, women are inherently less warlike, more nurturing, etc.

Eco-feminists, on the other hand, reject the dualistic notion that women are closer to nature, and equally reject the attitude of certain radical and Marxist feminists that nature is something which women should distance themselves from. Applying the insights of ecology, eco-feminists acknowledge that we are part of nature, as are men, and that this connection to nature is something which all of us need to become more conscious of. They also stress that women are cultural beings, a status which has often been denied them in the past.

So, if women are not inherently more nurturing and conversely if men are not more warlike, what accounts for gender differences? Eco-feminists have drawn on the writings of a number of feminist authors who suggest that the differing characteristics of women and men are socially imposed, not natural. Feminist theorist, Gayle Rubin, in her essay "The Traffic in Women", has written:

*Men and women are, of course, different. But they are not as different as day and night, earth and sky, yin and yang, life and death. In fact, from the standpoint of nature, men and women are closer to each other than either is to anything else -- for instance mountains, kangaroos or coconut palms. The idea that men and women are more different from one another than from anything else must come from somewhere other than nature.*

This way of seeing women and men as so inherently different and conditioning them so they will be so is a product of culture. The same cultural prejudice, which separates men from women and sees women as inferior, views nature as something which humans are above and which they are destined to control. For eco-feminists it is important to challenge this conditioning.

In leaving the subject of feminism's relationship to eco-feminism, I should clarify one point. Although I have focused on the fact that certain types of feminism have been unecological, I



should stress that eco-feminism emerged out of feminism and developed an ecological orientation rather than the other way around. The first eco-feminist conference, called *Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the '80s*, which was held in 1979 following the near meltdown at Three Mile Island, was attended by 800 feminists. It was here that a number of apparently discrete issues such as sexism, racism, militarism and ecological devastation were linked together, based on the belief that the domination of nature and the domination of people are inextricably connected.

#### Why Does Ecology Need Feminism?

Over the last one hundred years, ecologists have added to our understanding of the intricate relationships which exist between all living things and how close we are to destroying that web of life and ourselves along with it. What they haven't often looked at, until recently, are the social relations and attitudes which are causing the problems -- that is, aside from blaming an undifferentiated humanity. *Social ecology*, developed by Murray Bookchin, is a notable exception to this. Eco-feminists have begun asking: who have been the movers and shakers behind the stockpiling of nuclear arms, the eco-catastrophes, the megaprojects, and who have commanded the corporations which destroy the environment? They have been mostly men. This is not to say that women are not capable of this too. The Margaret Thatchers of the world have taught us a valuable lesson in this regard. But institutions around the world which are destroying and depleting the environment reflect patriarchal values. These values which operate at the institutional level are reflected in the way men are socialized.

Men are conditioned to be objective, rational, active and willful, while women are expected to be subjective, emotional,

contributing factor to the depletion of parts of the natural world (although social ecologists would argue that the profit drive of capital is a larger problem). But recently some ecologists have made statements which have earned them the epithet of "eco-fascists".

Dave Foreman, spokesperson for the largest radical environmental organization in the U.S., *Earth First*, recently said:

*When I tell people how the worst thing we could do in Ethiopia is to give aid -- the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to let the people there just starve, they think it's monstrous.*

Eco-feminists have found this inhumane approach to be totally lacking in compassion and understanding of the economic and historical causes of the so-called "population crisis." In the case of Ethiopia people have been starving because of civil war, drought and many other complex social factors. In other famine situations, such as in the African countries of the Sahel and in Bangladesh, people were starving at the same time that the country was exporting food. In fact, the crisis in the Sahel was precipitated by the displacement of large numbers of people onto marginal land by cash crop plantations producing for European markets. Eco-feminists, in addition to considering population in this wider context, focus on the need for women to be empowered to control their own fertility. As eco-feminist Janet Biehl writes, "Perhaps the most important single factor in reducing population is the increasing control women have over their bodies and reproduction."

The population issue is an area where some ecologists and feminists are currently at odds. However one example of where women's concerns and ecology are working fruitfully together is in the area of alternative economic development in India. Here as in many Third World and predominantly rural countries, depend-

many other similar situations in Third World countries led Indian ecologist, Dr. Anil Agarwal, to say that, "The biggest ally in the demand for an ecologically and socially sound nature is womankind." In this statement is a recognition that the values of the household, with which women have traditionally been associated, are need-driven not profit-driven and reflect a different set of values and priorities which tend to be humane and ecological.

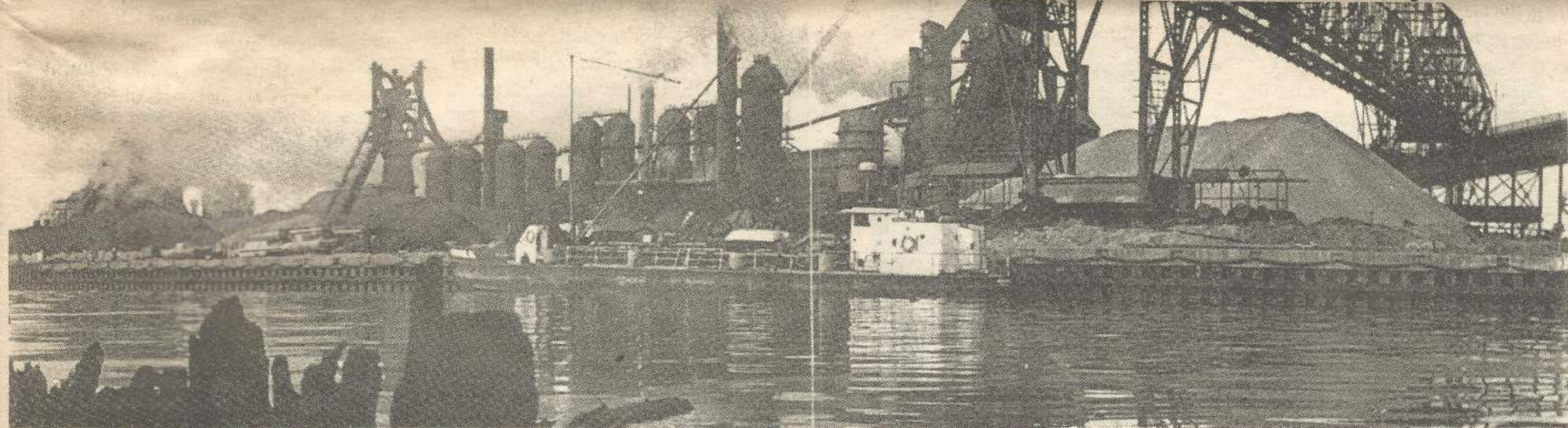
In a similar way those Native people in North America who still live close to the land remain guardians of the earth household to a much greater degree than do other residents of this continent. Just 40 miles from Detroit on Walpole Island, Native people, who have been critical of the planned Detroit incinerator, are still attempting to retain aspects of their traditional lifestyle in spite of the chemical contaminants that companies like Dow dump into the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers. And at the other end of the Great Lakes system, at the Akwasasne Reserve near Cornwall, Ontario on the St. Lawrence River, residents have to contend with enormous quantities of PCBs which General Motors has allowed to leach into the St. Lawrence River, poisoning the fish and wildlife and finding their way into the flesh of humans and the milk of nursing mothers. It is tragic and unjust that the people who have lived in harmony with the land here for so many hundreds of years, and who have so much wisdom regarding an ecological approach to living with nature, are being poisoned as a result of their continued close contact with the earth.

I'd like to end with few ideas of what would be necessary to bring about a society which would be both ecological and feminist. To bring about a society which would retain the life-affirming values and priorities of ecology and feminism would require a profoundly holistic change and a very different value

places in which they live and create methods for resisting threats which are directed at their environment.

--This means adopting new non-hierarchical forms of organization more suited to empowering people rather than the current system of handing over our power to experts, law makers and bureaucrats. These organizations can take the form of neighborhood assemblies, environmental watchdog organizations, public interest research groups, community economic development organizations. In my rural area in Ontario, people are rejecting additional landfill sites and "energy from waste" plant proposals. Given the choice, people are opting for increased recycling and paying more for garbage disposal rather than opting for a cheaper and more unecological alternative. In fact, proposals have been made for taking the money which would normally be spent on an incinerator or an Energy From Waste plant and putting it into the manufacturing of portable composters for each household so that biodegradable waste can go back into the soil as fertilizer instead of garbage. People in the area could be employed to build these, thus providing employment and reducing substantially the amount of garbage which needs to be landfilled or burned.

Decisions which affect a place should be made by the individuals who live in it. This seems obvious but it is rarely practiced. One framework for doing this involves people getting to know their area and learning how to live within its confines without destroying it. This is something *bioregionalists* have been advocating, and people with a strong land connection have been doing for thousands of years. It also means preserving the natural world where it exists and reintroducing nature in areas like cities where it has been destroyed. For instance, a "green cities" movement has emerged which advocates using available urban



passive and sensual. This rigid separation of supposed male and female characteristics makes men afraid to acknowledge their "feminine" side, and makes them see that side as inferior and something to repress. According to eco-feminist theorist, Susan Griffin, this creates a situation in which men are at war with themselves, with their feminine half -- a battle which is extended outside themselves into their interactions with nature and women.

I've been talking about why ecology and feminism need each other in somewhat abstract and theoretical terms, so I'd like to give a couple of examples of the importance of combining the two approaches in relation to two specific issues: population growth, and economic development in Third World countries.

The population issue has been a major source of controversy in the ecology movement. That the human population is growing at a rate which places added strain on the earth's resources is not the main point of debate. It is fairly widely agreed that the growing population is one

ence on the natural world is something which people are more directly conscious of. Defending the environment is not only an ethical decision, it is often a matter of survival.

Because of this dependence on nature, traditional development schemes which destroy the environment, as many do, have been strongly resisted in some areas. This resistance is, in many places, led by women. In the Himalayas in India, a movement called "Chipko" was begun to keep logging companies from clear cutting the forests. The women knew that this would only create short-term employment for the men and would lead to erosion of the hillsides, and flooding and hardship for themselves who depended on the forests for firewood and other vital needs. Because of their connection to the land and the need to provide for their families from it, the women were more motivated to protect the environment than were the men who would benefit from the jobs and who were not faced with the need to supply the household as the women were. This and

orientation than is prevalent today. Eco-feminism is about a process of reconciliation both with other humans as well as the rest of the natural world.

The types of changes necessary to bring about a society that an eco-feminist critique implies include the following:

--On a personal level, men and women need to be able to define their sense of self in non-traditional terms, allowing men to express their feminine side, learning to find satisfaction in the "private" sphere, or in the values of nurturance associated with it. For women, it would mean bringing their concern for life and the other more positive aspects of their socialization to bear on the "public" sphere which is presently motivated by lust for power and profit. In becoming psychically whole themselves, men and women will be better equipped to seek reconciliation with each other and the natural world.

--Unless people regain more power over their lives, a changed consciousness will be of limited value. This means that people will have to find ways to increase the amount of control they have over the

space to grow food and beautify our surroundings.

Ecologists have stressed the interconnectedness of all life and the urgency of respecting and preserving this balance in nature. Eco-feminists has shown that the domination of humans and the domination of nature are closely connected. Some ecologists have stressed that the difference between regarding where we live as an "environment" or an "ecosystem" is like the difference between viewing a place as a house or as a home. An environment or house implies something external while a home or ecosystem is something we see ourselves as part of. Eco-feminists would agree with this and extend the analogy to include the need to bring the values of the home, at its best, into society as a whole. For those of us who live in the Great Lakes region it is worth remembering that the first letters of the Great Lakes (HURON, ONTARIO, MICHIGAN, ERIE and SUPERIOR) spell HOMES. Let's not allow incinerator schemes and chemical pollution to destroy it. □



by Tatyana Osipova. Translated from Russian by Cathy Fitzpatrick

In May 1985, I was transported by convoy from Ruzayevka to Potma to a trial on charges of Art. 188-3 for "disobeying the camp administration." When I appeared in the doors of the *Stolypin*, the name for prisoners' trains that has stuck since the Tsar's day, there was a joyful commotion: I was the only woman in the car. After the usual wolf whistles and cries of "Give her to me -- I've been a bachelor for three years!" -- my train companions settled down and began asking questions -- "What's your name?" "How many years did you get?" "On what charge?"

"Art. 70," I replied.

"What's that?"

I explained that it was "political," for defending human rights.

"Say, do you know Yury Orlov? And Naum Meiman?" a youthful voice rang out.

I was surprised by such an unusual degree of erudition from a *zek*, as we called prisoners, and asked him how he knew of these men, who were members of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

"Oh, we've got a political prisoner among us, too," the young man's neighbor explained to me happily.

Despite the convoy's shouts of "Stop talking!", we tried to have a conversation, and I listened to the incredible story of my young travelling companion.

Leonid Gromov -- Lyonya was his nick-name -- had been involved in arson at the Ulyanov Automobile Factory.

"What do you mean, arson?" I gasped

in alarm.

"They manufactured trucks there and put armaments on them and sent them to Afghanistan and Nicaragua."

"Well, so what's the point?"

"Why, don't you see, they're going to kill people there, and it's wrong to kill people."

Gromov had tried to search out human rights activists back in 1984, but at that time virtually no one remained free. Had he found us, his youthful energies may have been channelled in a different way. But even before that it was difficult to find us: my husband and I once approached a city information bureau to see if we could obtain our own address in Moscow and we got back the answer that we did not even reside in Moscow.

Lyonya, who had barely turned 21, couldn't go on living in peace. He was tormented by the thought of people who would die somewhere because an ordinary work day went on at the Ulyanov Automobile Factory, and because one after another death-dealing truck rolled off the conveyor belt. He made a desperate decision: to hinder their production. He spent seven months breaking into the offices where the technical documentation was kept, the documentation provided by the factory's customer representatives -- that is, the military -- and burned everything in sight. As a tool-and-die maker, Gromov could pick any lock. One after another, he set fire to the party committee office, the trade union office, the office of foreign patents (or as they were called at the factory, American patents), and the French lathes for making small parts. Panic broke out at the factory when people could not get into their workshops and offices in the mornings because the locks would be broken. Even when they repaired them, they would soon mysteriously be broken again. And whoever it was who was breaking them, wasn't getting caught. Rumours flew that an entire organization was operating.

It got to the point that Vitaly Fyodorchuk, who was at that time the Minister of Internal Affairs, threateningly ordered that the arsonists be found. Hidden television cameras were installed at the factory. And it was only with their help that they managed to turn up Lyonya. Incidentally, he had taken all measures to ensure that there would be no casualties in the fires, and indeed, there never were any victims.

An Inspector Kalinin took up the investigation of the case. "They wanted to nail me on a political charge at first, but then they felt sorry for me and gave me a criminal charge."

"They felt sorry for you! You're young and stupid -- if you'd gotten a political rap you would have been jailed with your own kind, but now you're going to be thrown in with our types," commented his neighbour, who was a common criminal.

"But where are they taking you?", I asked apprehensively, already sensing something bad.

"To the Serbsky Institute, for a psychiatric examination," he answered lightly, seemingly untroubled by the thought.

"Get ready to depart," the convoy shouted to me, knocking on the barred window.

As I made my way through the *Stolypin*, I hesitated for a few seconds at Lyonya's compartment. Several faces were pressed up against the bars, but I at once picked out Lyonya's youthful face, that still had a child-like expression. My heart contracted in despair, because I knew what torture awaited this boy.

"Well, good luck...." I said.

Later I learned that in December 1985,

Lyonya was tried. The psychiatric experts, of course, pronounced him insane and unfit for trial. There was no witness at his trial -- he, the defendant, was not even there. The sentence: compulsory treatment in a Special Psychiatric Hospital, that is, in a psychiatric prison. Lyonya is now being held in Kazan Special Psychiatric Hospital, in Wing Three. This lively, emotional youth now looks lethargic and listless, the result of medications that are supposed to "cure" his heart from sympathizing with people. Communication with the other political prisoners who are also in Kazan provokes the dissatisfaction of the doctor, which can cause harsher medical measures.

I could never forget Lyonya after our meeting. But I remembered him the most, with particular bitterness, in Europe, and even in America. The word "Nicaragua" is often seen on posters and in newspaper articles in the West. Numerous people protest against the sending of American weaponry. But nowhere, not in a single country, did I find protest against the sending of Soviet armaments. The timidity that has seized the world is truly amazing. Or is it that everyone thinks that it is wrong to send American armaments, but alright to send Soviet ones?

"But people will be killed there, and it's wrong to kill people."

Over and over again, I hear the youthful voice. Yes, it is wrong. It's wrong no matter whose weapons are used. □

Note: August 3 is Leonid Gromov's birthday, and he will be turning 24. The address of the Kazan Special Psychiatric Hospital is:

420082 Tatarskaya ASSR,  
g. Kazan  
ul. Yershova  
d. 49, uchr. UE - 148/st.-6,  
3-e otdelyeniye  
USSR

Letters of protest can be sent to:  
Mikhail Gorbachev  
Kremlin, Moscow  
USSR

## "It's wrong to kill people!"



photo by Peter Kjellers/Mira

Social

Change

Tool

for the 80's



... a quarterly subject index to over 150 alternative publications.

Get your library to subscribe to The Alternative Press Index, if it doesn't already.

Institutions: \$100/year  
Individuals and movement groups: \$25/year  
List of Alternative & Radical Publications: \$2

For more information write:  
Alternative Press Center  
P.O. Box 33109  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
(301) 243-2471





photo from the New Internationalist

## SEMINAR #4

by Shannon e. Ash

the topic is this November morning  
Lowland Maya Settlement Archaeology

studying riverflow past window  
between glimpses  
of words:  
research domain  
instrumental assumption  
cultural features

these words about  
Mayan people,  
lived in this part of Guatemala,  
once and  
trying to determine  
the spatial distribution  
their settlement patterns

and the woman writing these words,  
mentions, briefly, the  
obstacles in the process  
of her research

specifically, map-making

specifically, "Factors affecting the quality ... of maps  
include equipment, time available ... and so on, even to  
attitudes of the local population. Problems in all  
these areas often hamper Mayanists' mapping  
programs..."

in my presentation, I mention this  
the time 1981 Guatemala  
I say that at this time there was  
a campaign of genocide  
against the native peoples, the peasants

campaign of genocide  
genocide, campaign of  
she did not mention this, I say

the word spoken  
pushes off the few unblinking faces here today  
bleached ringlets and tidy shirts

this word  
genocide  
flips past among  
homogeneous patio cluster  
integrative features  
resource management  
campaign artifacts  
of genocide, population reconstruction, genocide  
instrumental campaign feature genocide integrative  
genocide structure genocide

the word  
sinks, disappears  
into mud, under rubber boots  
could have been any other word spoken today

should I have said blood, bodies  
covering the terrain, making work difficult  
for the map-makers?

(in the corner of my eye I see the  
contour map of North America I trace a path southwards)





The most important above ground organization in Guatemala today is the human rights group *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo* or G.A.M. (Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared). Like its sister organizations in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and other countries, G.A.M. is the moral conscience of the nation -- and a thorn in the side of the military and right-wing Establishment that rules Guatemala with an iron fist.

Since the C.I.A.-directed overthrow of Guatemala's democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, the country has suffered through 34 years of terror and repression. Out of a population of just over 8 million people, 120,000 persons have been murdered -- including massive numbers of student, labour, indigenous, and campesino grassroots leaders. Thirty-eight thousand of these people have been disappeared -- that is, their bodies have never been found. Because of this murderous repression much of the movement in Guatemala is forced to organize itself in a clandestine or underground fashion. G.A.M. is exceptional in that it takes the extreme risk of operating completely above ground -- criticizing the ongoing kidnappings and assassinations that take place in Guatemala on a daily basis, and demanding punishment for the torturers and murderers who continue to serve openly in the ranks of the military, the police, and the extreme right-wing political parties such as the M.L.N. (the so-called *Movement for National Liberation*). Unfortunately many of G.A.M.'s leaders and supporters have been murdered since its formation in 1984. Nineth de Garcia is G.A.M.'s most famous survivor.

In December 1985 the military and right-wing of Guatemala decided, for public relations reasons, to allow the election of a "civilian" Christian Democratic President, Vinicio Cerezo. At first many people hoped that Cerezo's administration would end human rights violations

and improve the socio-economic conditions of Guatemala's super-exploited majority -- but events of the last two years have left these hopes unfilled. G.A.M. has consistently criticized Cerezo for his refusal to prosecute right-wing assassins and kidnappers.

Although political violence has decreased somewhat from the genocidal proportions of 5 years ago, political murders and kidnappings occur daily. Cerezo has admitted that prosecution of these death squads, development of a land reform program (the wealthiest 5% of Guatemala's population control almost all of the land suitable for cultivation), or termination of the bloody counter-insurgency war in the Highlands is impossible "because the military would oppose it." Nevertheless the political atmosphere in Guatemala has changed over the past year. In spite of death threats many Guatemalans who believe in economic and social justice have begun to rebuild their grassroots organizations and to initiate a new wave of popular protest throughout the country. Three recent demonstrations on January 8, 13, and 18 each brought out 30,000 to 50,000 demonstrators. G.A.M., the *Mutual Support Group*, has been an integral part of this political reawakening.

The following interview with Nineth de Garcia, leader of G.A.M., took place in mid-January in Guatemala City and was printed in the Guatemalan weekly magazine *Cronica*. The translation here is my own.

Nineth de Garcia is the most famous, articulate, and controversial human rights leader in Guatemala, controversial in the sense that the military and the right-wing hate her and would love nothing more than to see her dead. It's a minor miracle that she's still alive to tell her story. Her husband, Fernando, a well known and respected labour activist, was kidnapped and presumably later killed in early 1984. Shortly thereafter Nineth and a larger group of Guatemalan widows formed G.A.M., whose 2,500 members today are predominantly women and predominantly Indian. Letters of support and financial contributions are welcomed. These letters and contributions are more secure if delivered by hand to Guatemala or else sent via the solidarity group NISGUA in the USA (*Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala*, 1314 Fourteenth Street N.W., Washington DC, USA 20005) since unfortunately government officials often interfere with G.A.M.'s mail. Nineth de Garcia has frequently been mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize for her bravery and forthrightness. I only hope that Nineth is still alive by the time that you read this interview, and that her words will move you

to challenge the U.S. government and the multinational corporations for their continuing complicity in the murderous oppression and genocide of Guatemala and Central America.

*Nineth de Garcia Montenegro, 29 years old, is a petite, attractive, and vivacious woman. Born in Guatemala City, she graduated from the University of Belen in 1978. She teaches classes in a school in the capital in Zone 7, and she is the headache that will not go away for all the human rights violators in Guatemala.*

*In this interview we were interested in finding out about the personal side of Nineth, how she came to be who she is, and how she lives in her private life.*

*We encountered a Nineth that very few people know, a woman with a disguised voice from the militant speaker we know at demonstrations, a woman who finds it very hard to speak of certain matters.*



*Several times during our interview she cried.*

**Cronica:** How was your childhood, your adolescence?

**Nineth:** My childhood was rather uneventful, without pain nor glory. I didn't have any economic problems, because I came from a middle class family. We lived in Zone 15 of Guatemala City. Yes, I did have some psychological problems because I was the adopted daughter of the Montenegro family, and this always gave me a bit of frustration, a feeling of solitude, in spite of the fact that my adopted family loved me. I believe that this situation gave me a slightly different consciousness.

**CR:** Did you belong to any of the student movements in the 1970's?

**NI:** In Belen, no. But I observed and watched with approval the struggles of the teachers' association and I was well acquainted with the existing social problems of the 1970's, although I didn't participate actively in the student movement until 1979, when I entered the Law School at the University of San Carlos.

**CR:** What made you begin to participate in the movement then, in 1979?

**NI:** I got involved with the struggle of my

# "The dictato an interview wi

fellow students in the College of Law. Also in the University I got to know Edgar Fernando Garcia. He was an engineering student and an active member of the A.E.U. (the *Association of University Students* -- heavily repressed throughout the years of the dictators). Fernando was 20 years old, and so was I. I fell deeply in love with him.

**CR:** What was Fernando like?

**NI:** Fernando was very happy and spirited. He had all the good human qualities, but he was also very militant politically. I don't know if it's possible to have a love more powerful than the one I felt. Perhaps because I never knew who my real biological parents were. I don't know. I loved him. I loved him so much. We were married on Mother's Day, May 10, 1980. For me, Fernando was -- perhaps it's bad to say this -- the father that I never had, the sanctuary for my soul, the brother that I always needed, the ideal comrade, doing everything together, having the same aspirations for building a real democracy in our country.

**CR:** Did you and Fernando have children?

**NI:** One only, my daughter, the only one that I have. She was born in 1982 and she came to bring about an extraordinary love and unity in our home. Her arrival nourished no doubt an even greater emotional dependency of mine with Fernando, but as one can imagine I had never felt such profound happiness.

**CR:** And you and Fernando continued studying at the university?

**NI:** In the year that my daughter was born, 1982, Fernando continued studying, but he also began to help out in the struggles of the labor movement. At this time certainly I was happy, but I was also very afraid, and oftentimes anguished.

**CR:** Why were you suffering from anxiety?

**NI:** Because of the political period that we were living through. The dictatorship of Lucas Garcia, later the dictatorship of Rios Montt. I was always profoundly worried about the safety of my husband. This was perhaps the first time that I had been genuinely terrified, on a personal level. Always I had believed that the struggle that my husband and I were waging would someday be successful. I was a woman of the new type, not just a housewife -- nonetheless anguished.

**CR:** But of course it was natural for you to feel afraid.

**NI:** Yes, I had a tremendous fear of losing my family, my home, the first that I had had in my life. I told Fernando how scared I was.

**CR:** And how did he respond?

**NI:** In that period (1982-83) I had the desire for us to abandon the country, because the situation that presented itself





# Dictatorship has taught me the road":

## with Guatemalan activist Nineth de Garcia



was terrifying. But Fernando told me that this was the place he had to be. Here was where his struggle was, and that others perhaps had to flee, but not him. Thus in this atmosphere of near-panic I saw arrive the Christmas season of 1983. Our last Christmas... For us Latin Americans the Christmas season is very special, isn't it true? I remember the New Year's celebration and I remember giving thanks to God that we had survived until 1984. I went out into the street when the people began setting off fireworks and I thought: My God, thanks for letting me be with my husband. But two months later this was not to be.

CR: Many people do not remember or do not know what happened next...

NI: It was the eighteenth of February, 1984 when Fernando left to go to work. He was driving our car, and in the intersection of Third Street and Seventh Avenue in Zone 11 near a police station he was intercepted by a car with police license plates. Since I was in our house, I didn't know what was going on. Fernando had told me that he'd be returning home for lunch, but lunch time came and went. He didn't come home. Nor did he arrive home for dinner. At ten o'clock at night I became overwhelmed with terror. Never had I felt like this. A horrible sense of desolation. I called my family. I searched out my mother-in-law and we sat together at my house.

CR: Who was living with you at the time?

NI: Only my husband and my daughter. But on this night my mother-in-law stayed with me and my daughter. And there we were, my daughter, my mother-in-law, and I, when, at three o'clock in the morning armed men arrived at our doorstep. They shot open the outside gate to our yard. They didn't shoot open the door to the house because we opened the door. There were men on the roof. Three men entered the house, armed with machine guns. They had arrived in automobiles without license plates with polarized, darkened windshields. One cannot imagine with what cynicism, with what cruelty, they told us that they had Fernando. They were dressed in civilian clothes. They entered the house as if they knew it well. They had to have had the house under surveillance because they entered directly into our bedroom. And they gathered up all of the books that we had.

CR: And what books were these?

NI: They were books that we used for our classes. Others were books of literature. They said that these books were Marxist-Leninist books. They remained in the house for about an hour. That which I can never forget is that they had the brutal cynicism to enter into the kitchen. They heated up some coffee and they

proceeded to drink it with great tranquility, while they spoke of what they had done to Fernando...

CR: What did they say?

NI: "Ah," they said, "look at what we've done to him," and then some filthy words... "Petty bourgeois of shit. We wounded him in the leg... He was bleeding."

I was scared. I believed that they were going to take away my daughter also... I was threatened terribly. They left. Twenty days later Colonel Edgar Djalma Dominguez gave a press conference in which he spoke of the books that they had taken from my house. He said that these books had been found in a "safe house" of the guerrillas. But our house was never a safe house or a hideout for the guerrilla movement; it was only my house. And those books contained nothing illegal, they were only books dealing with historical and social matters.

CR: What did you do after they took away your husband?

NI: For three days I found it impossible to believe what had happened. I was not able to accept that he had been kidnapped. I said "no, no, he's going to return." Because they told me they were going to investigate his disappearance within 72 hours. Thus, three days passed, and when I was with my friends from the University and the union, I finally realized what had



happened in reality, and then I began to scream and cry. There's a part of me that has been mutilated forever. I was a very happy woman that everyone liked to be around. I was very sociable. But with the disappearance of Fernando a new woman surged forward, single mindedly determined to find out what had happened to my husband.

CR: But shouldn't you have made some formal inquiries?

NI: My mother-in-law and I began to work on a systematic schedule. One day we went to the president of the *Association of Guatemalan Journalists*, another day we went to the rector of the University -- since both of us were students. Then one day we went to meet with the dictator Mejia Victores. You just can't imagine... We exhausted all the pos-

sibilities. We arrived at the point of speaking to Mejia Victores, who had agreed to an audience with us. "Speak to us truthfully Senor Victores." And in my anguish I had said to my daughter Alejandra, who was barely two years old,



that she had to speak of her papa (in front of the dictator Victores). Victores received us, and the child told him what I had told her to say -- I thought that this might touch his sensibilities in some way -- and he said something to the effect that "Stupid people...who can only utilize lies and drivel if they have a woman and children." And we left. It's a good thing that we left.

CR: Do you believe that you have become hardened by these experiences?

NI: No, but everything was changing a great deal. I don't believe that I had become hardened, but nothing was the same. For me nothing is the same. I struggle because I am certain that only the struggle can give me the answers that I need.

CR: What happened after this?

NI: Many times we went to the morgue at Verbena to identify corpses. I would go with my mother-in-law and we would look at the cadavers. Look, it was disgusting -- bodies horribly mutilated and tortured. Horrible, horrible. At times I thought "Oh, my God, let this be my husband -- so as to end my Calvary, my misery." But later I'd say, "No, please don't let it be him." But you must understand, this situation of looking at corpses all the time, of coming and going, the disgusting replies of the authorities...how hard it all was. How hard it is. Sometimes I feel like no one understands this -- the state of paranoia and terror shared with other families of the disappeared.

CR: What did you do then?

NI: I didn't know what to do. Suddenly it occurred to me to speak to them, to the other families of the disappeared. You know that anguish and love are capable of accomplishing anything. We spoke together. We were at first only five women, three wives and two mothers. We all agreed that it was very important for us to be united -- that all five of us speak to the President, that we make public an-

nouncements, that we hold a mass. That we use all of our talents and abilities to publicize what had happened. Because we just had to do this. And we were completely sure that our disappeared family members were going to reappear... In my case I knew where my husband was, where they had taken him for the last six months. I knew that he was still alive -- this is no lie -- and this heartened me greatly. I believed until then he would reappear.

CR: This is the story that people don't know about, because the other face that the public knows about is that of Nineth de Garcia, the hard one.

NI: The dictatorship has taught me the road, I can assure you of that. Imagine, here we are in 1988. My husband has been disappeared for four years. We have repeatedly stated to a government commission that has been formed, the *Commission for Peace*, headed by a Doctor Meyers, that "It is easy to deal with the whereabouts of Fernando. He was picked up as part of an official police action on February 18, 1984 at ten o'clock in the morning. This is recorded in the official national police records." Why won't they investigate this? Many people saw Fernando being taken away by the police, who said "This man is a Communist," because they found his official union identification card.

It's not easy to go over these things. That they deny the facts and, above all, that they play with your emotions. This changes a person totally. I am a strong woman. Very determined. I am a mother that profoundly loves her daughter. This child is what keeps me living. She looks a little bit like Fernando. She has his eyes. This is the love, most pure, that never fails me. This is my home and my inspiration, along with my organization G.A.M.

CR: Do you still believe that your husband is alive?

NI: I don't know. I just don't know. It's possible that he's dead. He is a *desaparecido*, a disappeared person. And what is a *desaparecido*? A victim of the repression. A person of whom it is impossible to know how much they've suffered. This is not life. This is something that you cannot forget. It's possible that Fernando is dead. But there's one thing of which I am certain: his assassins are still alive. □



Introduction and translation by Jon Reed

Artwork by S. Nash.



by Ron Hayley

In the upheaval of the 60's, young people, largely cut off from the radical traditions of the past, were forced to improvise theory and strategy. Among the questions they had to come to grips with were: what groups in society are most revolutionary; what are the main obstacles to social change, and how is social change going to be effected?

The separation from the traditions of the past was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it meant that activists were initially less bound by the dogmas of Leninism and social democracy that were predominant amongst 30's radicals. But it also meant that they had less of a critical perspective, and various shopworn theories could make their way in by the back door.

The most revolutionary groups in society were variously seen as "the workers," radical youth, or ghetto Blacks. In fact, a common refrain from the time was that "the most oppressed are the most revolutionary." This was a leftover from Marxist determinism that one's economic position determines one's consciousness. In fact, apart from a brief period when the peasants and artisans of various religious and ethnic groups were wrenched from their traditional communities in the "old country" and thrust into the factories of America where they confronted the capitalists as a class united by common exploitation, the American working class has never been that disposed to revolutionary ideas.

Moreover, ghetto Blacks, after a series of insurrections in the mid-to-late 60's, have largely succumbed to the daily grind of trying to "get by," or have embraced the violent and "glamorous" lifestyle of the lumpenproletariat, trying to achieve the "American dream" by criminal means.

In retrospect, the "most oppressed are the most revolutionary" theory is flawed because the oppressed must not only have a *motive* (their own oppression), they must also have an *opportunity* to develop in a revolutionary direction. This "opportunity" can only be provided by the sphere of culture -- by a sense of community and a body of values which stand in opposition to those of capitalism.

Bioregionalist author Peter Berg has written of the phenomenon of "Global Monoculture" whereby capitalist values and products displace those of a thousand indigenous and traditional cultures. People who accept the goals and aspirations of capitalist culture are not capable of fighting against it, in a meaningful way. These local cultures have not been

entirely stamped out -- even in North America -- and if people are going to "own" the process of social change, it is important that these traditions serve as the starting point for radical movements. As Canadian activist Errol Sharpe has written,

*When social change is brought about in a way that severs people from the traditions and experiences of the past, it disempowers them and makes them objects rather than subjects in the social process.*

Developing economically independent institutions is important too. The dependence of workers on the capitalist bosses for jobs, far from making them radical, causes them to embrace any socially or ecologically pernicious "development" so long as it promises economic benefit.

Another theory in the 60's was the belief that the "masses" were already subjectively revolutionary; all that was needed was to give them a "push." By striking "blows against the empire," radicals would embolden people to rise up against their oppressors. When anarchists go out and trash banks or set fire to dumpsters, they seem to be implicitly endorsing this theory because it is assumed that people are subjectively ready to support such actions or to emulate them themselves. As the Minneapolis Central America activists wrote in their critique of "direct actions" undertaken by the "Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League,"

*It requires courage to organize a movement of people to end war and the crimes of the US/Soviet super-power chess game. It takes courage and skill to reach out to people, to patiently explain that Third World peasants are not the enemy, and that we have the power and responsibility to change the world... In Panama and Palestine the people in the streets are supported by the majority of the people. You may wish it was that way here, but there are no shortcuts in the process of transforming*

*society for the better.*

A third common theory was that participation by the majority (or at least a significant number of people) in the process of revolution in North America was unnecessary. The main force which would topple U.S. imperialism would be national liberation movements in the Third World; all that was needed was a "fifth column" of sympathizers inside the "mother country" who would support their efforts by acts of sabotage, etc.

This, in effect, envisioned a coup d'etat or invasion taking place which would result in a revolutionary dictatorship ruling over the American (or Canadian) people in the name of the "world proletariat." This theory is authoritarian to the core, and has nothing in common with anarchism, although some anarchists continue to act as if winning over the majority of people is unimportant.

A concern with winning people over in the mainstream doesn't mean that we should treat people as a homogeneous mass, or that we should pitch our message to the lowest common denominator. Some groups in society can act as a lever for politicizing other groups. If we wish to identify potentially radical sections of society, we have to figure out what are the prerequisites for achieving our "ideal" world and work backwards. Obviously, we need a citizenry that is willing to live in harmony with nature, is more concerned with the "quality of life" as measured in community contacts, relationships, personal life, work life, etc. than they are in material gadgets and overpackaged products. They must also be willing to work in non-hierarchical institutions to achieve socially agreed-upon objectives.

Where do we find such people and what movements are potentially pointing in the direction of such a society? The ecology movement is one such place, though to different degrees depending on which segment of the movement we're talking about. But certainly more so than the workers' movement in recent years,

the ecology movement has broached the issue of tailoring production and living patterns to the carrying capacities of ecosystems, has suggested a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity, and has (at its margins) argued that a profound relationship exists between our hierarchical position vis-a-vis the rest of nature and hierarchy within society itself; that the two are in fact indivisibly wedded together.

Certain sections of the feminist movement have argued that the domination of men over women is related to other forms of domination (by class, race, age, bureaucracy). Indigenous cultures, like the North American Indians, have also questioned the insensitive and brutal attitude of Europeans to our Mother Earth, and have described the frenzied materialism of our culture as a "life out of balance." In North America, there is even a vestigial rural culture which is more concerned with environmental quality, a rich community life, and personal independence than with consumerism and status-seeking; this culture continues to practice mutual aid and self-provisioning to a greater degree than is characteristic of society as a whole. As Errol Sharpe writes,

*Many of the concepts and values of... traditional rural society must be revived if urban-industrial society is to be rescued from the structures imposed by monopoly capitalism and the material culture of consumerism.*

While these various groups have not as yet formed an alliance, they represent potential building blocks for a movement seeking to build an ecological and non-hierarchical society. It may well be that a test of relevance for anarchists in the coming years is how well they manage to relate to one or more of these groups, helping them broaden their analysis and encouraging them to build inter-group alliances.

Of course, it has been argued that none of these groups, individually or collectively, forms anywhere near a majority of the population. But that is not the point. The point is whether they have something

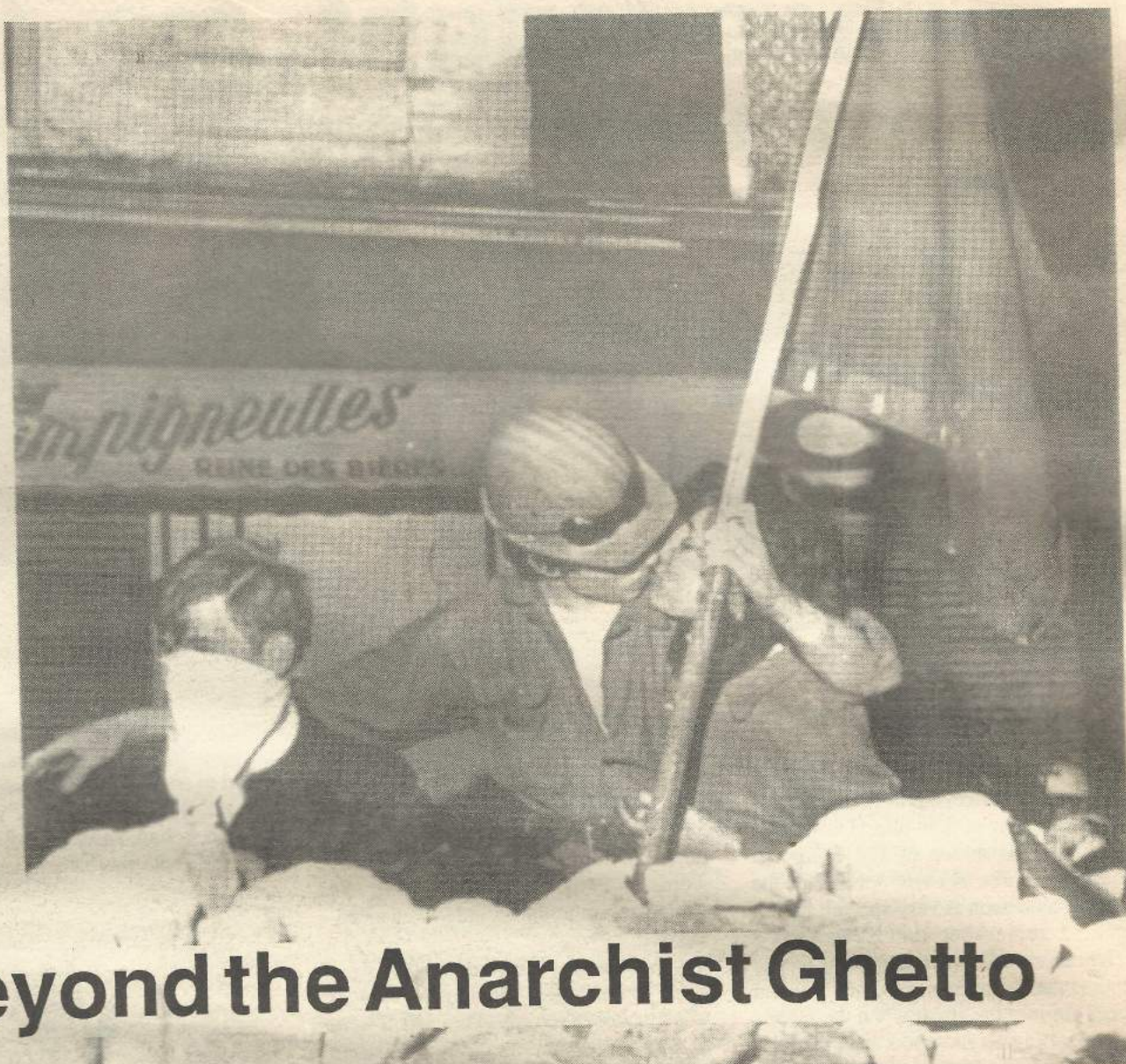


photo from Agence Associated Press

## Beyond the Anarchist Ghetto



relevant to say to society as a whole. It is the crudest kind of reductionism which looks at numbers only. It's not just quantity, but quality that counts. For instance, the number of Inuit in Canada is only 20,000, yet these 20,000 have far more cultural impact than the equivalent number of residents of the town of Dundas, Ontario. The population of the province of Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) is approximately equal to that of Oshawa, a major industrial town in Ontario. Residents of P.E.I., an area where pre-industrial values persist, recently forced the cancellation of a proposed Litton plant for the manufacture of air and anti-tank defense systems. Such opposition to proposed "job creation" would be unheard of in Oshawa.

Cities are valuable places for cultural interchange, for developing and diffusing new ideas, and for birthing political movements. But they also pose disadvantages. While anarchists can by no means afford to abandon where the majority of people live, it may be that the "culture of resistance" which forms around "planetarian" values (preservation of nature and preservation of autonomous cultures) may develop a populist base in the countryside first.

The reasons for this are as follows: capitalism's destruction of nature and of traditional cultures is concentrated in the countryside (the city is already largely conquered territory). Urban people are shielded from this destruction and benefit from it to a certain degree. Another factor is that the political process in rural areas tends not to be as ossified or as hierarchical -- local politicians are more vulnerable to public pressure, and local newspapers and public assemblies can sometimes serve as a venue for lively debate. In addition, there is a tradition in the countryside of self-reliance and mutual aid, partly because the formal economy tends to be more fragile and less reliable. There is potentially greater interest in "community economic development" projects which involve people in economic activity which is potentially less damaging ecologically and more subject to community input and control. Thus, the process of cultural homogenization and economic centralization is often not as far advanced.

One manifestation of the emerging culture of resistance in rural areas is the "bioregional movement" (see KIO #17). What remains to be seen is whether this movement becomes a vehicle for populist organizing or whether it allows some of its more New-Agey and "hippy-trippy" practitioners to turn it into an exercise in counter-cultural navel-gazing. Whatever the form -- be it bio-regionalism, community economic development, Native rights or environmentalism -- it behooves anarchists to relate to this "new localism" which is emerging as a response to domination of the countryside by national governments and multinational corporations, and to find ways to extend these tendrils into the urban environment. Thus, the path to winning over the majority may begin, ironically, in those hinterlands where cultural homogenization and economic centralization have not yet fully eliminated the values and institutions of pre-industrial society.

If people are interested in exploring these issues further, I will be leading a workshop on anarchist strategy at the *Anarchist Survival Gathering* July 1-4 in Toronto. I would encourage participants to read "The Planetariat: The Will-of-the-Land" in KIO #19, and "From Tradition to Revolution" by George Woodcock in KIO #20. □

by Bruce Allen

*We can notice how much the interests of the political parties have gained more and more influence on the END process and how the influence from the independent peace movement has decreased. We are worried about future work in the END process if the political parties gain*

cile the independent groups with state-controlled peace committees who work hand in hand with the political police and their masters in the ruling Communist Parties.

This was evident at the 1984 END Conference in Perugia, Sicily where the attempt to work with both provoked considerable turmoil and led to the formation

Coventry joined with a much larger contingent of Western peace activists generally loyal to their cause and held a series of "after-hours" meetings. These led to an inconclusive showdown with the social democratic minority at the *END Liaison Committee* on the second night of the convention, and ultimately led to the formation of an "interim Committee"

## END at the Crossroads



*too much influence. If so, the process will cease. -- Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS)*

Over the last eight years, *European Nuclear Disarmament* (END), an organization of the "non-aligned" peace movement, has played a very important role in legitimizing independent peace activists, East and West, who refuse to oppose the activities of one nuclear bloc while supporting those of its opposite number. The organization came into existence after the 1980 *END Appeal* issued by the *Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation*. Since then, an annual convention has been held every year in a different city. In 1987, the convention was held in Coventry, England.

Since the inception of END and the birth of autonomous peace activism in the East bloc (activists who refuse to toe the line of the *Official Peace Committees* in those countries), a debate has raged within the Western peace movement as to who Western activists should build an alliance with: the official Peace Committees or the independents. While representing an enormous step forward relative to other groups, END has consistently chosen a "middle of the road" stance -- that is, they relate both to the "officials" and to the independents. In the process, END has inevitably landed itself into one bind after another precisely because there is no way to genuinely recon-

of the *European Network for East-West Dialogue* as an alternative to END. Since then, the pendulum has swung one way and then another. Thus, the 1985 Amsterdam END Conference was marked by an unprecedented degree of support for the independent groups. By contrast, last year's convention in Coventry saw the independents marginalized and heavily outnumbered by the combined presence of members of the official East bloc peace committees and members of some East bloc Communist Parties.

Two developments had largely led to this occurrence. One was the acceleration of Gorbachev's top-down program of reform in the USSR. The other was the substantial progress being made towards a U.S.-Soviet deal on land-based missiles in Europe. Both phenomena had the effect of bringing the issue of who really spoke for peace in the East into sharper focus and helped to spark a new crisis over the issue within END. In particular, they gave a sort of justification to the minority (mainly social democrats) within END who are clearly much more concerned with facilitating "detente from above" than "detente from below." This approach involves relying on established political parties and their spokespeople rather than relying on a grassroots movement of ordinary citizens.

Faced with this turn of events, the few East bloc independents in attendance at

consisting of ten persons -- five men and five women, five persons representing the East bloc and five from the Western peace movement -- which was mandated to press for changes at the next Liaison Committee meeting scheduled for early October in Brussels. Essentially, the changes envisioned were designed to restore END to a firmly non-aligned course and to give the East bloc independents real, meaningful input into the preparation of this year's convention to be held in Sweden, organized by the *Swedish Peace and Arbitration Committee*.

Meanwhile, an astonishing development took place. The *Hungarian Peace Council* (HPC) became the first official East bloc body to sign the END Appeal. By doing this, it gained both voice and vote on the Liaison Committee which works by consensus. Signing the END Appeal was a shrewd maneuver almost certainly done with the intention of directly linking END to the East bloc and obtaining what amounts to a Warsaw Pact veto over decision-making in the Liaison Committee, thus effectively making a mockery of END's commitment to non-alignment.

At the Liaison Committee meeting in Brussels, it was decided that the ruling East bloc parties will not be invited to the convention in Sweden. The peace committees will be invited, but on the condition that the independents be allowed to attend. Those entrusted with organizing the conference are generally pro-independent.

These measures constitute a step forward, but they are also inadequate. They are inadequate because the door is still wide open to the possibility of future conventions where official East bloc opinion attains a greater weight than that of the independents.

There is a sad and ironic parallel between what is now occurring in END and what is taking place in the USSR under the banners of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*. Positive changes have occurred and are due to occur in both bodies. But there is no firm guarantee in either case that the "errors of the past" will not be repeated because the grassroots is not in control. Gifts and concessions made by the bureaucracy can be taken away by the bureaucracy.

Europe's foremost peace organization is standing at the crossroads. If it refuses to get off the fence, it risks being superseded by a new organization that is firmly committed to "detente from below." □

*Update: As of our date of publication, the Hungarian Peace Council remains on the END Liaison Committee. The next END Convention is scheduled for the weekend of June 29 to July 2 in Slund, Sweden. A short report on it will appear in a future issue of KIO.*

For further information on END and the East-West Dialogue Process, contact the author at: ACT, P.O. Box 284, Main Station, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 6T7.



# SCOUNDRELS

## Records Reviews by Robyn

#10 (WET)



by Robyn Turney

### MORAL CRUX, Moral Crux (Velvetone)

This foursome of gorgeous boys from Washington serve up, on their first release, an exquisite punk and thrash homage to hardcore. Two problems, however, mar an otherwise impressive first attempt. The band's veneration for the medium is almost too reverential and, as a consequence, the music never veers off the beaten track into anything daring or revolutionary that a group like, for example, *The Dead Kennedys* (my idea of qualitatively superior punk) would do. This leads directly to my second difficulty with the LP, which is that the lyrics, although their political precision is beyond question, cover all too familiar territory already much better addressed by other, more vibrant bands. There are, however, occasional thrashes of brilliance like *Mindless Obedience* (speaks for itself), *Destitute* (about street people), and *Mental Oppression* (concerning the dismal sterility of working class life under capitalism). Now, don't get me wrong, this is superbly executed, technically perfect, damned good and deadly serious but, unfortunately, ultimately humourless and forgettable punk.

But what the hell! Can I really be so hard on a fledgling band just testing their wings in the alternative airwaves and the one, moreover, that's given KIO its theme song? I don't know if *Kick It Over* was intended especially for us or not but the lyrics certainly do justice to our 'zine. I have only one major ideological problem, boys. On the back of your LP cover, you indicate that among the things our society can do without are "Racism, Sexism and Ageism, to name a few." But in your tune, *Is there life (before death)*, concerning conformist females, the lyrics open with "Hey little girl, you ask me to buy you some beer/You really leave me cold but that ain't because I'm queer". That strikes me as being rather homophobic. Talk about throwing a brick through the window of ignorance! Clean up your act, boys, this here's a faggot reviewing your album.

### THE SCOUNDRELS, Join Hands (Swaddle)

The Scoundrels are four more cute boys, this time from Holland. This, their second album, is a breathtakingly orchestrated Dutch treat of hardcore. The cuts *Slavery*, *Sometimes*, *At least I try* and *All we do* are especially well executed. While the arrangements are better and show more inventiveness, many of the criticisms of the last album are equally applicable to this one. No song immediately hooked into my spirit with an enthusiastic pogo designed to bring plaster and light fixtures crashing on the heads of my downstairs neighbour (my own personal touchstone for a good album). The biggest drawback of *Join Hands* is its failure to deal with social critique in an highly imaginative or original way. Again, it's good, solid

Artwerk by Robyn

music which is, however, in the final analysis, unmemorable. The LP includes lots of animal liberation enclosures, mostly in Dutch.

### FUNERAL ORATION, Funeral Oration (Swaddle)

This is a difficult album to review. Once again, it's the product of four adorable Dutch boys and, once again, the style is hardcore. Although a thin substratum of social commentary underlies a number of tracks, only one, *Didn't want to die*, with its antimilitaristic message, ever approaches the subject in an overt manner. Instead, the album has all the earmarks of a personal odyssey, and the lyrics of *We are not one*, for example, set the tune for the whole LP: "Away I go to find myself/I need to know where I go". Almost every song is characteristic of this quest for truth, an attempt to find one's place in a conventional world without conforming, a goal not achieved without pain, as the lyrics of *It ain't easy* witness: "There's not much I've done/Though other people may have fun/They're not what I want to become/... And hell knows where I'm going to/And hell knows what I'm going through too." The arrangements are adequate, but there's nothing particularly outstanding here. Why the band chose to express all this fluffy, introspective stuff through a punk/thrash medium is beyond me, but it may be worth a listen if you're in the mood for the atypical.

### ALL, Allroy sez . . . . (Cruz Records)

This is the worst, and most hyped, of the four hardcore albums under consideration. Three surviving Descendants plus one former *Dag Nasty* member comprise ALL, continuing the tradition of the last Descendants LP of the same name in the eclectic marriage of pop to hardcore, a style which the accompanying press kit describes as "chainsaw" or "slam" pop and which it, at the same time, contradictorily maintains "defies categorization." The name of the band is designed to evoke the concept of limitless hedonism, i.e., all. Cruz Records worked overtime to assemble lots of glowing reviews from music 'zines void of any political perspective to testify to the band's technical genius. And yes, yes, their rhythmic irreverence, spunky freshness, originality and sassy inventiveness is inarguable. And yes, their crisp vocals, resonant caustic guitar and top-notch percussion must be heard to be believed. But it is equally true that Hermann Goering composed classical pieces of incontrovertible technical brilliance and, so far from anything even remotely resembling social

critique, the content of Allroy sez . . . . is positively reactionary. Is this the dismal dregs to which punk has sunk, to become fodder for AM stations of the future, totally in line with their allegiance to the status quo? In fine, this is one of the most sexist eulogies of misogynist patriarchy that has ever (dis)graced my ears. The title of one of the reviews included in the press kit, equally applicable to this band in its current incarnation, says it all, "The Descendants: California's next Beach Boys?" and one quote will suffice to describe them: "(T)hey are a California band that sings about girls and possess a distinctly American middle-class sense of fun, fun, fun." Let's not forget that the Beach Boys are ardent Reaganite Republicans and the comparison is all too telling. Come on, boys, did you really think you could send your disk to an Anarcha-Feminist 'zine and get good press? Sorry, but your material just doesn't wash. And that, in a nutshell, is Allroy sez . . . . by ALL and I say, who gives a fuck what Allroy sez . . . .?

### THE BLANKS, The Blanks (Falsified Records)

The Blanks (Steve Bitto, Joan Bort, Bill Boyer and Chris Israel) are off to an extremely promising start with an excellent debut folk-rock album which puts me in mind, stylistically, of my favourite dyke folk-jazz band, *Baba Yaga*. The opening cut, *Roots and Radicals*, a caveat not to lose sight of our origins, unfolds in gritty, addictive strains of folk-rock only to collapse in an elegant and delicate transition to a reggae beat for an encore of the opening verse, thus setting the tune for the whole album. The LP features three great solos by Bort (*Set yourself free*, *Start all over again* and *Pouring*), who earns plaudits for her top-notch guitar work, and kudos to Boyer for his performance on piano. Clean vocals and percussion garnish this delicious LP, and watch out for that Boyer composition, *Kathy's Run*, where the terrible consequences of the obsession to be number one at any and all costs in sports is effectively and brilliantly utilized as an analogy to capitalist society's cut-throat competitiveness. "Survival of the fittest/Not your neighbour/Doesn't it connect with Kathy's behaviour?" You bet it does! This album is a real treat, and let's hope it won't be long before we hear more from the Blanks.

### AHDRI ZHINA MANDIELA, First and Last (Multicultural Women in Concert)

Ahdri Zhina Mandiela is a genius and the material on the two tracks of her introductory cassette tape surpasses by light years anything contained on the other five albums reviewed here. She alone of all these artists has the makings of a major performer. With this in mind,

it is indeed a pity that neither biographical data nor background material was included with the cassette, but if content is any indication, she is an up-and-coming reggae DJ to be reckoned with. Womyn DJs are still the minority in reggae, although their numbers are on the increase. Reggae has always been conspicuously male-dominated (as is true of most music) and the most popular and successful DJs, like Yellowman, while firmly cognizant of the dynamics of racism are, however, hopelessly mired in macho-male sexist stereotyping.

Mandiela positively exudes the spirit of brilliance lyrically, vocally and musically. She is a superior poet and an extremely powerful, haunting and evocative vocalist. In *Speshal Rikwes* she succeeds in skillfully blending the racial, social and political integrity reggae demands with an intoxicatingly infectious and imperatively danceable rhythm.

In contrast, *In South Afrika Today*, part poem and part song, vigorously drenches apartheid in caustic and blistering indictments, eating holes in racism by illustrating its fearful consequences with razor sharp, chilling and very moving imagery. Especially poignant are Mandiela's lines relating to liberal do-gooder rock musicians of the Bob Geldoff school and their "band aid" approaches to social problems. "In South Afrika today there are no 'tears for fears'/Gentle songs/Only bloodshot eyes from sleepless nights/And stillborn cries/No 'northern lights' except the fire on our southern breasts from the fuel of improvised riots/No 'live aid' because you don't feed fighters even if they are children/'We are' not 'the world'/Just that valley without peace."

Hopefully, the release of an album by Mandiela is not far off. □

**MORAL CRUX, Moral Crux** (Velvetone Records, 607 W. 3rd, Ellensburg, WA 98926). For Moral Crux personal correspondence: 48 "E" St. S.W., Ephrata, WA 98823, (509) 754-4416.

**THE SCOUNDRELS, Join Hands** (Swaddle Records and Tapes, Wernhoutseweg 195, 4884 MC Wernhout, Holland).

**FUNERAL ORATION, Funeral Oration** (Swaddle Records, as above).

**ALL, Allroy sez . . . .** (Cruz Records, P.O. Box 7756, Long Beach, CA 90807, (213) 424-8291).

**THE BLANKS, The Blanks** (Falsified Records, P.O. Box 1010, Birmingham, MI 48012).

**AHDRI ZHINA MANDIELA, First and Last** (Multicultural Women in Concert, P.O. Box 147, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6M 4E1 (416) 535-4309). The cassette is \$6.00 plus \$1.50 postage.

### SWADDLE

Swaddle Records  
Wernhoutseweg 195  
4884 MC Wernhout  
Holland

Peter-vocals

SIDE ONE  
SPESHAL RIKWES IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY...  
SOUTH AFRICA DUB

First & Last

Kick it Over  
How many more?  
C'mon, man!

THE BLANKS

FUNERAL ORATION

ALL

AHDRI

THE SCOUNDRELS



# Of Fathers and Sons

by Bert Young

Phyllis Chesler, in her book, *About Men*, remarks that it is sad to think that men would create a civilization based on principles of paternity and legal ownership of children, but never get to know their sons and their daughters, never really participate in parenting, or the routines of intimate fathering. I had, therefore, some doubts and fears about writing this article. As men we do not want to respond to Chesler's statement. What has made us what we are is more easily laid at the doorstep of our mothers. It is they who cared for us, got to know us, loved us, picked us up and put us back on our feet, and asked us how our day was. Our father, the father within us, is too strongly ingrained, his "structures" are too difficult to get at, and too resistant. When we do, there is either too much confusion, too much pain, too much anger, or too much love, too much lost opportunity to express it and have it returned.

My first fear of writing on this topic was that I'm not the one to write about this fathering. I didn't have a good relationship with my father, and I have enough doubts about myself as a father. The second fear was more serious since writing the article forced me to confront the wounded father within me. The wounded father, argues Samuel Osherson, in his book *Finding Our Fathers*, is the result of "a conflicted inner sense of masculinity rooted in men's experience of their fathers as rejecting, incompetent, or absent." Since my own father has been dead for six years, reconciliation has been that much more difficult. What has helped me with this emotional healing process has been my involvement with the men's movement.

These feelings of anger, guilt, and pain have also helped me to be a different father, a father that wants to be intimate with his children, that makes time to be with them, to hug them, and to openly confront them as human beings. The more I experience my role as a father, the more I am aware of how little opportunity my own father, and his father before him, had to do the things that I do.

I was very angry with my father while he was alive and even today, there is a strong dose of anger and remorse that I did not confront him with my feelings. There are equally strong feelings of guilt that my judgement was unfair. There is also some joy, perhaps tinged with envy,



photo by J. Sells

in knowing that a number of men in the men's movement are now better able to deal with their feelings towards their fathers.

My own father didn't have this choice with his father who died when he was only twelve years old. He immediately had to take on the responsibility of helping his mother survive. With little money left, school was out of the question and his adolescence was consumed by the necessity of work. There was even less time later as he had his own family and had to work at two jobs to make ends meet.

My own time with him followed the tradition. It consisted of working around the house and maintaining a large garden plot that supplemented his meagre income as a factory hand. We rarely, if ever, took time off for ourselves, to be with each other. To me, he was a solitary man. A man of few words. His approach to fathering was one of respect, obedience and submission to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The rest was left up to my mother. He was as rigid as the church

doctrine in which he believed and as intolerant. As the years passed, I too, became stronger about my opinions and we often came to an impasse. The major obstacle was my disagreement with his religious views. Ultimately, it was responsible for the estrangement between us. For as long as possible I avoided any confrontation, knowing and fearing his feelings of disapproval. After attempts to blame my views on the fact that I had married a Protestant, he simply looked at me with disgust and anger, and left the kitchen. We never spoke about it again.

I know now that he felt he was failing to keep me in line with the beliefs and values that were essential in his eyes. It is also understandable if we accept the notion that men show their love symbolically, through their behaviour, and not their words. My father was saying to me that if I didn't accept his religion and practice it, I didn't love him. It is a love-trap where no one wins. Since I could not have his love, he wasn't going to get mine. A year and a half later he died.

My mother reassured us that he died

peacefully, loving us all, satisfied and proud of the five children he had helped raise. I was not assured. It took me at least a year to mourn his loss.

As Father's Day (invented by a woman) came around again this June, my doubts lingered, not so much as to whether he loved me (although he never said he did) but whether he was proud of me. Did he believe I loved him? Was he aware of my anger? Could our relationship have been something other than what it was? For my part, I know that we should have spent more time together. He should have wanted to get to know me better. I should have been less demanding, less arrogant, more understanding. But he often seemed unable or unwilling to accept or understand my pursuits. He wasn't even convinced of the worth of my studies until I could show him that in my first year of work as a teacher my salary was worth three times his salary before retirement. His political views made it impossible for us to agree on anything. Even when I began to bring our children to visit him, he seemed confused and frustrated with my involvement in childcare. His only concern seemed to be whether or not we were raising our boys to be good Catholics. I suppose he was still looking for the type of son he had always wanted.

My own political views represented a challenge to him and his way of thinking. My educational accomplishments may have made him feel inadequate, especially when I occasionally contradicted his statements with too much rigor, and not without some feeling of smugness about his ignorance on a particular issue.

However, along with these bouts of anger there were longer ones of disloyalty. These feelings, referred to by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb as one of the hidden injuries of class, explain the destructive frustration and pain of being defined and defining oneself as a failure. Working class fathers, like my own, were too preoccupied with the daily worry and fear about making ends meet to have much left over in the way of emotional support for their children. Looking back at my father's struggle and assigning blame makes little sense. It didn't stop the pain. But it did help me with reconciliation. As a man who had little of his own father, growing up in a society that refused to allow him to share his feelings with other men, my father wore his vulnerability like a heavy coat of armour.

Some of this searching has had the effect of helping me be a better father, in addition to the benefits of a professional career. I can and do spend more time and effort with our two sons. I also made sure that I was present and part of the birthing process. As a result I feel closer to our children. I share more of myself with them. My hopes, frustrations, anger and love is not hidden from them, nor their's from me.

This sensual experience, denied or kept well hidden by most men, is at the same time the key to understanding what we have repressed in our pursuit of domination and power. By denying our vulnerability, we escape from sensuality



and therefore, from our children. The desire or need to take these risks has helped me to accept my responsibilities as a father and has given me a sense of self-esteem.

This is often easier said than done. As work and political involvement compete with time spent with my sons, they compensate by pulling away from me; others fill the gap. The patterns are hard to break, but the rewards are well worth it. One of these occurred at my recent birthday. To hear that I was a "dude", and "the best father compared to their friends' fathers", was the greatest birthday gift I have ever received.

Several studies have noted that, since the 1970's, there has been an estimated 10 percent to 15 percent increase in today's fathers who are "substantially more involved" in their families' lives than the typical father is or used to be. Being more involved means sharing the load of parenting and the frustration and joy that comes with it. Although I am more comfortable with our children and they with me than I was with my father, my doubts remain. As Osherson states, "for men to feel empowered, to come to terms with our identities... means healing the wounded father within, an angry-sad version of ourselves that feels unloved and unlovable."

However, it is not enough for a few of us to have the opportunity and take the risks of a reconciliation with our fathers, dead or alive. Nor is it enough to hope that our sons will respond accordingly to their sons. We must make it possible, without the burden of work interfering or the loss of income, to renovate fatherhood. It is necessary that our principles be reflected in a concrete manner.

A beginning in this direction is that taken by countries like France and Sweden. In Sweden, parents have the right to nine months paid leave and there is government pressure to make fathers take at least three months of this allowance. The Swedish government in 1979 also passed a law giving parents with children under eight the right to a six hour working day, while those with children under eighteen months can take full time leaves of absence, so one parent can be at home receiving the benefits while the other could be working a shorter day. In France, men take three days paid leave following the birth of their child, and a law in 1978 extended parental leave for the raising of children

to fathers for one year if the mother is not taking it. In Finland, from 1978, a father staying at home to take care of the child becomes entitled to the allowance of just over six months around the birth.

As noted earlier, another direction we can take is that of encouraging men to participate in the growing men's movement. The opportunity to share with other men in a safe haven our doubts, fears and apprehensions of being a father has definite advantages. My involvement in a local men's support group, and participation in the Kingston and Grindstone conferences for men has given me the courage to take risks with my emotional life and my interventions in the lives of other men. In turn these interventions have enabled me to rely on and trust the human potential in men and their endeavours. It has also given me a joyful feeling that no previous political involvement has ever done. A feeling that gives me the emotional strength to confront my wounded self as a male and as a father; a feeling that has been hidden for such a long time. It has also given me and other men a patience and understanding that all men need if we are serious in our political intent to break the patterns, the social controls that prevents us from being human.

If we want a better civilization for our sons and theirs, let us build that future with fathers who speak from the heart. A heart that recognizes the principle of equal participation in the sharing and loving of their children. □

*Bert Young is a college instructor in Quebec, and is active in the Men's movement.*

#### References:

Phyllis Chesler, *About Men*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

Ken Druck, *The Secrets Men Keep*, New York: Doubleday, 1985.

Mary Ingham, *Men*, London: Century Publishing, 1984.

Samuel Osherson, *Finding our Fathers*, New York: Free Press, 1986.

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York: Vintage Books 1973.

*Excerpts from Samuel Osherson, Finding our Fathers, New York: Free Press, 1986:*

Shere Hite's survey of 7,239 men revealed that "almost no men said they had been or were close to their fathers."

Judith Arcana writes that in interviews for her book on mothers and sons, only "about 1 percent of the sons described only good relations with their fathers."

Jack Sternbach examined the father-son relationships of 71 of his male clients. He found fathers were physically absent for 23% of the men; 29% had psychologically absent fathers who were too busy with work, uninterested in their sons, or passive at home; 18% had psychologically absent fathers who were austere, moralistic and emotionally uninvolved; and 15% had fathers who were dangerous, frightening to their sons, and seemingly out of control. Only 15% showed evidence of fathers appropriately involved with their sons, with a history of nurturance and trustworthy warmth and

connection.

Rebelsky and Hanks have suggested that fathers spend an average of 37 seconds a day interacting with infants in the first three months of their life. Peder- sen and Robson found an average of about an hour a day of direct play between fathers and nine-month infants, including time spent together on weekends.

A recent survey of father-child contact after parental divorce found that by early adolescence 50% of the children had no contact with their fathers, while 30% had only sporadic contact with them; only 20% of the children saw their fathers once a week or more.

Perry Garfinkel notes in *In a Man's World*, a study in which 300 grade seven and grade eight boys were asked to keep a careful record of the time they spent alone with their fathers over a two week period; the average time each boy spent alone with his father was seven and one-half minutes per week. □

If you or your project can qualify as anarchist, libertarian Marxist, direct action-ist, radical pagan, bio-regionalist, prisoner support, prison abolitionist, traditional Native, or supporter thereof, you are entitled to be listed in the *Canadian Black*

*Book*. Send your name or that of your project, a contact address, and a brief description (donation of money or stamps appreciated, but not mandatory) to: Chaotic Distribution, P.O. Box 15642, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5B4.

## For a Left Green Politics:

### Read GREEN PERSPECTIVES

Political Bulletin of the Green Program Project

Latest issues:

No. 6 (May)

***The Crisis in the Ecology Movement:***  
*A Left-Wing Perspective*  
by Murray Bookchin

No. 7 (June)

***The Politics of Myth:***  
*A Critique of the Spirituality Movement*  
by Janet Biehl

No. 8 (July)

***The Population Myth:***  
*A Critique of the New Malthusians*  
by Murray Bookchin

No. 9 (August)

***Independent Politics:***  
*A Grassroots Approach*  
by Howard Hawkins

Subscriptions: \$10 for 10 issues.

Single issues: \$1.50 each.

For a full Left Green literature list, send SASE.

**Green Program Project**  
P. O. Box 111  
Burlington, Vermont 05402



# You Can't Fool the Children of the Revolution

## Sandinista/Miskito conflict

that the denial of the right to independent political organizations makes the FSLN "autonomy process" a sham.

As I shall mention again later, while in Nicaragua, I was denied permission to visit Indian territory. In Managua, however, I did have the opportunity to interview Miskito and Sumo people, as well as the staff of church and governmental organizations, who were familiar with the Indian situation.

### 1987 Civil Liberty Suspension

While I was in Central America, Nicaragua adopted a new constitution which nominally guaranteed freedom to organize, freedom of expression, freedom of travel and freedom of association. Within hours of adopting the constitution, President Daniel Ortega suspended all of these guarantees and others, including the right to privacy and equal protection of the law. The due process guarantees of the Nicaraguan constitution have been suspended.

On the face of it, according to the January 9th, 1987 suspension of civil liberties, Nicaraguan Indians have no more right to organize than do other independent sectors of Nicaragua, such as the Catholic Church and independent labor unions. For over one year, the Church and CUS (a federation of independent, non-Sandinista labor unions which fought against Somoza) have been denied the right to even publish their newsletters. I heard many other reports from non-Indian sources about interference with the right to organize sources of political power independent from the Sandinistas. These reports included restrictions on travel, harassment by FSLN controlled mobs (*turbas divinas*), other forms of intimidation and denial of access to consumer goods.

Nicaraguan Indians face particularly harsh restrictions on their freedom to organize for political power. The two largest Indian groups in Nicaragua are the Miskitos (over 100,000) and the Sumos (about 10,000). There are about 1,000 Ramas, none of whom I encountered while in Nicaragua.

**"...Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians are denied the right to organize both in theory and in practice."**

### MISURASATA Banned

While I was in Central America, most of the Miskitos and Sumos I met said that MISURASATA was their peoples' organization. "MISURASATA" is a Miskito acronym for Miskito, Sumo, Rama and Sandinista working together. MISURASATA was formed in 1979. Its predecessor organization, *Alpromiso*, had formed in 1972 to resist Somoza's attempts to take Indian lands. MISURASATA and *Alpromiso* have recognized the authority of the village councils of elders.

In February of 1981, MISURASATA was scheduled, pursuant to its agreement with the Sandinistas, to present its study of Miskito, Sumo and Rama land rights.



photo by Peter Verlag

MISURASATA had planned a huge assembly to pressure the Sandinistas to recognize Indian land rights. MISURASATA had been effectively organizing Indian people in a way which was independent from the Sandinista Party. In a pattern which has been

**"...the Sandinistas won't even allow what is widely viewed as their own organization to hold an organizational assembly."**

repeated many times in Nicaragua, the FSLN harshly cracked down on MISURASATA, arresting and jailing several dozen of its top leaders. Later on in 1981, the FSLN banned MISURASATA entirely from functioning as an organization in Nicaragua. Its top leaders went into exile in Honduras and Costa Rica.

### MISITAN Formed by FSLN

Not until mid-1984, after three years of war between the Indians and the Sandinistas, did the Sandinistas form a Miskito organization MISITAN, with participants from 33 out of 250 Miskito communities. The Sandinistas supported MISITAN as an alternative to MISURASATA between December 1984 and May 1985. Also in 1985, the FSLN created an "Autonomy Commission" to develop an autonomy law for Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, which includes the traditional territories of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians. Apparently, a government autonomy commission was viewed by the FSLN as an alternative to negotiating with MISURASATA, their armed Indian opposition.

### MISITAN Denied Right to Meet

At first MISITAN, as the FSLN sanctioned Indian organization, was part of the autonomy process. Then, in late 1985, MISITAN leaders resigned from the autonomy process. MISITAN at that time asked that the FSLN recognize MISURASATA, which the Sandinistas refuse to do. Since late 1985, MISITAN has been asking for permission to hold a general assembly to re-organize itself and elect new officers. According to a

MISITAN leader I interviewed who asked for anonymity, the Sandinistas have refused permission for MISITAN to hold this assembly. Although this is consistent with the official FSLN policy of suspending civil liberties since late-1985, it is surprising that the Sandinistas won't even allow what is widely viewed as their own organization to hold an organizational assembly.

### Travel Restrictions

Numerous cases of restrictions on freedom to travel were reported to me. It is not surprising that when a Nicaraguan resident leaves Nicaragua to give speeches about the current situation, the talk is likely to be very close to the FSLN line. Because those who disagree with FSLN policies are consistently denied permission to leave the country to do public speaking, foreigners are denied the opportunity to learn what is going on inside Nicaragua.

I experienced these travel restrictions first hand. When I arrived in Managua, I immediately began working with an inter-denominational church organization to obtain FSLN permission to travel to Puerto Cabezas, the largest town in Miskito territory. A church leader went to the "Migracion" office with me, presenting a letter directed to the head of that office. We were given the impression that I would be allowed to go after the three day waiting period. After three days, I went in to get my paper stamped. Instead, the official crumpled it up and threw it away.

### Miskitos Resign From Autonomy Commission

Recently, Armando Rojas, a lawyer and the only Miskito member of Nicaragua's national Autonomy Commission Executive Board, resigned from the Executive and from the Autonomy Commission. According to several reports which I received in Managua, at the end of 1986 he had asked for permission to travel to Costa Rica to solicit the views of MISURASATA on the autonomy process. This travel permission was denied by the FSLN, so Armando Rojas resigned from the Autonomy Commission. Another Miskito who resigned from the Autonomy Commission is Andy Shogreen, the top official in the Nicaraguan Moravian Church. The vast majority of Miskito Indians are members in the Moravian Church. Barbara Jackson, an official in the Autonomy Com-

by Joe Ryan

*The issue of the Sandinista government's handling of its relations with Nicaragua's Indians has been a subject of debate amongst North American radicals. The leading faction of the Miskitos, represented by Brooklyn Rivera, recently held talks with Sandinista leaders, May 10-14, 1988, in Managua. Rivera claims to seek recognition by Managua of the Miskitos' "historic rights", and not the overthrow of the government. After five days, the talks collapsed, with the Sandinistas characterizing Rivera's proposals as "absurd", and accusing Miskito delegates of "ethnocentrism" and "ethno-populism". The following article is being reprinted from the Spring 1987 issue of Akwesasne Notes with their permission and with the permission of the Viola White Water Foundation. Its author, who directed the American Friends Service Committee Pacific Northwest Region Indian Rights Program for four years, is a lawyer who has worked on behalf of several South American Indian communities, and has published numerous articles on indigenous rights. The article covers the period up until early 1987.*

I have been following the situation of the Indian peoples in Nicaragua since 1982 and have been in communication with MISURASATA, organizational representative of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama. When I have questioned the relocations, arrests and jailing of Indian leaders, the burning and bombing of villages, Sandinista supporters have urged me to visit Nicaragua and learn first hand what is happening before I criticize the Sandinista policy. In January 1987, I spent three weeks in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica researching the current situation. The Sandinista/Indian war is a tragedy and I hoped to find some signs of possible reconciliation. I also wanted to examine Sandinista claims that the Indian territory was in the process of achieving "autonomy."

One of my prime concerns while in Central America was to investigate the capacity of Nicaraguan Indians to freely organize themselves to demand their indigenous rights. My conclusion is that the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians are denied the right to organize both in theory and in practice. Further, it is clear to me



mission in Managua, confirmed for me that Rojas and Shogreen indeed had resigned from the autonomy commission. She refused to give the reasons. Both Rojas and Shogreen live in *Puerto Cabezas*, which I was denied permission to visit. There is no telephone service to *Puerto Cabezas*, so I was effectively prohibited from contacting these two Miskito leaders.

It is easy to see why North American Indian leaders opted to travel secretly with *MISURASATA* last year. Travel in the Miskito areas is severely restricted, limited to who and what the FSLN want people to see.

#### Autonomy Process in Shambles

**"After spending some time in the office of the National Autonomy Commission, it was clear to me that all key decisions on the autonomy process were made in Managua, by non-Indians."**

A great deal of international propaganda has been generated by the so-called "Autonomy Process." This fits in to the FSLN campaign which says that their mistakes (oppression) against the Miskitos are "in the past." Up until this day however, they still have not recognized Miskito, Sumo and Rama land rights, nor their right to organize independently from the Sandinista Party. The fact is that the Autonomy Commission for North Zelaya, the Miskito area, has been widely repudiated by the Miskitos and there are no Miskitos on the Executive Committee of the National Autonomy Commission.

Many Miskitos and Sumos I interviewed in Managua said that they would be arrested and jailed if they went to Indian territory and tried to organize Indian people to object to the Sandinista-controlled autonomy process. After spending some time in the office of the National Autonomy Commission, it was clear to me that all key decisions on the autonomy process were made in Managua, by non-Indians.

The FSLN is gearing up to convince international public opinion that they are achieving an historic progressive approach to Indian autonomy. When you hear this, please consider that most Miskito leaders have rejected this process, and that those who disagree with it are not allowed to organize against it.

#### Reconciliation

This denial of the right to organize inhibits the peaceful resolution of the conflict between Nicaraguan Indians and the Sandinistas. Another factor making reconciliation difficult is the intervention by the United States and the Soviet Union. The Miskito/Sandinista conflict is intertwined with the convulsions going on in Central America; therefore, progress toward peace and human rights in the region will enhance the prospects for peace with justice in Indian territory.

Right now, the primary victims of the Sandinista Indian war are the Indian people. As with other indigenous peoples, their very survival is at stake. □

## In Brief

dust in Nova Scotia. These practices include the use of chemical herbicides, clear-cutting, and opposition to green belt legislation -- i.e. a disregard for human health, wildlife and the environment. Please support the boycott by leaving the following products on the shelves: *Cashmere Bathroom Tissue, Cottonelle Bathroom Tissue, Duvet Bathroom Tissue, Viva Paper Towels, Scot Towels, Scot Towels Plus, Scott Family Napkins, Confidets Beltless Maxi Pads, Confidets Sanitary Napkins, Scott Cut-Rite Wax Paper, Baby Scott Diapers, Fresh Wipes, Scotties Facial Tissues*. For more information, contact: *Scott Boycott Committee*, R.R. #4, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, B0K 1V0.

The *Tropical Forests Action Plan* (TFAP) supported by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United States Agency for International Development has been dismissed by participants at the *Asia-Pacific Conference on Deforestation and Desertification*, held in New Delhi on October 23-25, 1987, as an old programme seeking fresh legislation to commercialize forests.

Severe criticism of the TFAP has also come from Dr. Vandana Shiva, Coordinator of the *Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy*, India, who was asked by the *World Rainforest Movement* (a coalition of environmental and scientific groups) to review the Plan. According to Dr. Shiva, the Plan fails to take into account that international development projects are responsible for the destruction of tropical forests through dams, mining and resettlement projects, and instead blames the destruction on the poor. Moreover, she sees the Plan as an extension and expansion of the World Bank's ongoing forestry projects which have had seriously negative social and ecological impacts. The Plan prescribes large-scale transformation of natural forests and prime agricultural lands into commercial plantations of industrial wood. Moreover, the Plan has no place for the rights of indigenous peoples who have lived in the tropical forests since time immemorial. The economics of peasant and tribal life are totally neglected in favour of the enormous production of commercial wood.

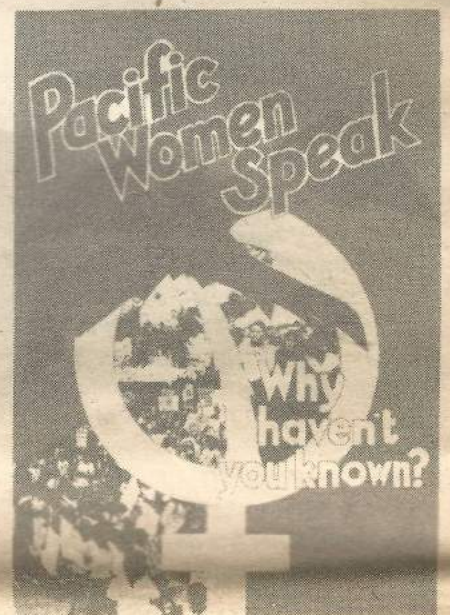
For more information, contact: *Sahabat Alam (Friends of the Earth) Malaysia*, 43 Salween Road, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.

Patrick Andrade (see KIO #20) has produced a new tape entitled *The Death of John Wayne*. It is a collection of North American Indian poetry set to electronic, traditional and reggae music. Included are the tunes, "Dubwise for Kanak Women," and "Mobile Sweat Lodge." For a copy of the tape, send \$7.00 plus \$1.50 (for postage and handling) cheque or money order to: *Technawbe Sound*, 720 J. Carson Rd., Ottawa, Ontario K1K 2H3.

Also of interest is a new tape by *Art and Soul* (along with *Thom E. Hawk and the Pineneedles*) called *The Buffalo*

**Cliff Collection.** Send \$10.00 (plus \$1.50) to the same address.

Five Native fishermen are currently in four separate prisons serving 2-5 year terms as a result of their "salmon scam" convictions. They would appreciate receiving letters from supporters. Their addresses are as follows (numbers following names must be included or prison officials will not process their mail):



David Sohapp, Jr. (312904-086),  
Geiger Work Release,  
P.O. Box 19202,  
Spokane, Washington 99219.

David Sohapp, Sr. (12864-086)  
Geiger Work Release,  
P.O. Box 19202,  
Spokane, Washington 99219.

Bruce Jim (#12851-086 F.P.C.),  
Lompoc Penitentiary,  
3600 Guard Road,  
Lompoc, California 93436.

Wilbur Slockish, Jr. (#12858-086),  
Sandstone Penitentiary,  
Unit H, Box 1000,  
Sandstone, Minnesota 55072.

Leroy Yocash (#12854-086),  
F.C.I. La Tuna,  
Camp 1, Box 3000,  
Anthony, New Mexico 88021.

You can also contribute to assist the defendants' families during their absence, provide travel money for family prison visits, and defendant spending money while in prison. Contributions can be sent to: *Catholic Charities/Fishing Families Assistance Project*, 2414 N. Emerson, Portland, Oregon 97217.

The Pacific Ocean is the focus for many underreported struggles involving women, nuclear weapons testing, national liberation, and cultural genocide. Thanks to the heroic efforts of a few

The **Third North American Bioregional Congress** is scheduled to occur on August 21-26 near Vancouver, British Columbia. Registration will probably be closed by press time, but interested persons are encouraged to write for information on the bioregional movement. Contact: *NABC III*, Box 99, Lillooet, B.C. V0K 1V0. In addition, *Proceedings* are available of the 1986 Congress from the same address; they can tell you the current price in Canadian funds. U.S. residents should send \$10.00 (U.S.) plus \$1.50 (postage and handling) to: *Hart Publishing*, Box 1010, Forestville, CA 95436.

Put your finger on the pulse of environmental and social activism. The **Connexions Annual** is the most comprehensive reference tool on social, environmental, peace and community issues in Canada. The **Annual** is easy to use and contains more than 1500 organizations from all across Canada. If you are at all concerned with any aspect of social change, the **Annual** will be an invaluable resource for you. Available for \$17.95 from: *Connexions*, 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7.

Statistics released recently show that the number of arrests for anti-nuclear civil disobedience in the United States and Canada in 1987 increased by nearly 60% over recent years, to a total of 5300. Arrests occurred during over 180 actions at more than 70 sites. About 400 of the total arrests were for protesting nuclear power, uranium mining, and related projects. As a result of these arrests, more than 120 people served or are serving from two weeks to 17 years in prison, while hundreds more served lesser sentences. For more information, contact:

**The Nuclear Resister**, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson, Arizona 85733.

Since *Scott Paper* markets consumer products, a boycott of these products has been called as one way to protest the irresponsible forest practices of the pulp in-



women in England, more is getting out about what is happening there. Of particular note is the bulletin, "Be Active for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific," published by *Women Working for A Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific* (WWNFIP), and a highly recommended pamphlet entitled "Pacific Women Speak: Why Haven't You Known?". The pamphlets are 1.95 pounds (approximately \$4.00 U.S.) plus postage. For more information, write to: Bridget Roberts and Zohl de Ishtar, WWNFIP, Flat 1, 9 Beech Range, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2EU, England.

An excellent article on "The Tribal Peoples' Struggle for Human Rights" appeared in the December 15-January 14 edition of the *Philippines Human Rights Update*. For a copy, send \$3.50 (U.S.) to: Update, Task Force on Detainees of the Philippines, Sisters Formation Institute Building, 214 N. Domingo St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines.

*Survival International* carries on its work on behalf of threatened tribal peoples. For more information, write to: *Survival International*, 310 Edgeware Rd. London, W2 1DY, England.

*Processed World* #21 featured an article on *Televisa*, a pernicious Mexican media conglomerate with a virtual monopoly on Mexican TV. "The values it hopes to communicate are... consumerism, anti-communism, [and] the superiority of Caucasian culture." For a copy of the issue, send \$2.50 (U.S.) to: *Processed World*, 41 Sutter St. (#1829), San Francisco, California 94104.

On December 1, 1987, James Baldwin died at the age of 64. Baldwin was anti-racist and openly gay, and an extremely important Black writer and critic. Nothing has appeared in the anarchist press about Baldwin's career. It is a shame that the issues of racism and Black culture are given such scant attention.

Larry Joe Ross is a Black prisoner in



the Texas prison system. Despite having a perfect record, having acquired an education and trade skills while incarcerated, Ross is being denied parole after 13 years. For more information on the case, write to: *Arkansans For Freedom*

From Authority, P.O. Box 122, Berryville, Arkansas 72616.

*North Country Anvil* #55 featured a very interesting interview with James and Grace Lee Boggs on the epidemic of violent deaths afflicting Detroit's inner city youth, and the causes thereof. Copies of the issue are available for \$2.50 (U.S.) plus postage from: *North Country Anvil*, Box 37, Millville, Minnesota 55957.

A photography project by a Detroit-based group called *Urban Centre for Photography* (UCP) has caused con-



siderable embarrassment for the Mayor's office and the *Detroit Council of the Arts* which gave it a \$3000 grant. The project, which consists of large photographic posters exposing homelessness and landlord neglect of historic buildings has been denounced as "visual pollution" and as giving the city a bad image. For more information, see the article in the 11th *Hour* newsletter, published by the *Ann Arbor Tenants Union*, 4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.

Artists Krzysztof Wodiczko and Rudolph Luria have developed a design for a "personal shelter vehicle" for homeless people. This is an intriguing project. For more information, write to: *The Homelessness Vehicle Project*, 496 La Guardia Place (#212), New York, New York 10012.

**Dykes, Disability and Stuff** -- contributions sought for this start-up networking newsletter that wishes to provide fiction, art, poetry, comics, news, views, reviews, arts, letters, verse and controversy, ideas, resources and friendship possibilities.

Still in the formative stages, it has national and international aspirations to network among women with an interest in health, ability, visibility and disability. How about an ASL interpreted, wheelchair user-accessible (special needs welcome!) conference for the U.S. in 1990? Get on the mailing list, and send contributions of writings, articles, news, money, etc. to: *UPE*, P.O. Box 6194, Boston, Massachusetts 02114-6194.

An anthology of Scottish lesbian and gay writings will be available in November of 1988. For more information, write

to: Toni Davidson/Emma Healey, Scottish Anthology, Lesbian and Gay Centre, 58A Broughton St., Edinburgh EH1 3SA, U.K.

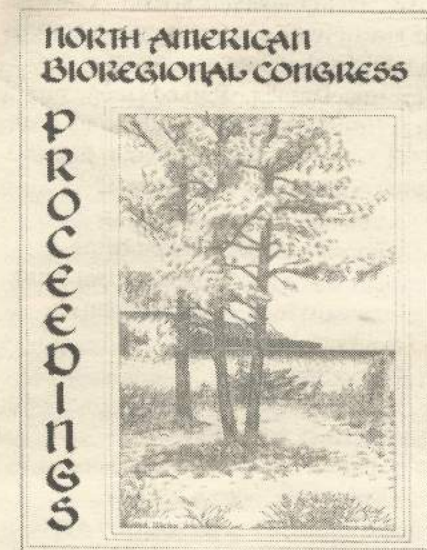
A five episode lesbian video soap opera, entitled *Two in Twenty*, is available from: *Two in Twenty*, P.O. Box 105, Somerville, Massachusetts, 02144 or call (617) 625-7882.

A comprehensive article on the legacy of anarchist Paul Goodman appeared in the March 15-April 14 issue of the *Torch*, newspaper of the post-Trotskyist *Revolutionary Socialist League*. For a copy, send \$1.00 (U.S.) to: *Torch*, GPO Box 1288, New York, New York 10116.

A new two-hour videotape is available of veteran anarchist Jack Frager reminiscing about "Emma Goldman As I Knew Her" and "My Experiences in the Russian Revolution." The tape, which is VHS, is available from: *The Anarchist Switchboard*, 324 East 9th Street, New York, New York 10003. Check with them as to the current price.

*Never Over Five*, as part of its anti-McDonald's campaign, has produced a button which says: "I Don't Eat at McDonald's and I Suggest You Do the Same." Copies are 75 cents each for 1-4 copies, 50 cents each for 5 or more. Send U.S. currency, and maybe a little extra for postage, to: *NO5*, Bobby Sweet, P.O. Box 4570, St. Louis, Missouri 63108.

The five animal rights activists who were arrested for allegedly spraypainting a *Kentucky Fried Chicken* outlet are still facing trial, and need funds for their defense. Send donations payable to: Mary Bartley, Barrister and Solicitor, 11 Prince Arthur Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1B2. Indicate the purpose of your



donation.

The *Toronto Anarchist Black Cross*, an autonomous section of the international Black Cross ("an international network of autonomous groups of anarchists who work to ensure that anarchist, class struggle and other prisoners aren't forgotten") publishes a newsletter on its activities. Write to them at: *ABC-Toronto*, P.O. Box 6326, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7.

Two anarchist prisoners seeking correspondents are:

Robert Shane Green (#628148)  
I.M.U., E-7, P.O. Box 520,  
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

Avi Naftel, P.O. Box B-45287,  
Florence, Arizona 85232.

Send U.S. stamps (if available) with your letters as prisoners have little money to buy postage with.

"It is impossible to function with a practical, free sense of Anarchy and to be a religionist at the same time."

I would like to hear from those who actually think this can be done with letters explaining how to do it. Write to: (Liberated, free thinking Anarchist/Atheist)

William Roger Sawyer (#40424), Arizona Prison State Complex Tucson (Santa Rita Unit), 10,000 South Wilmot Road, Tucson, Arizona, 85777-0004.

A Greek anarchist group called *Communist-Social Self Management* is interested in corresponding with other anarchists. Several anarchists in Greece are being held in jail and are facing very serious charges. Write to: *Communist-Social Self-Management*, T.K.- 31209 - T.O.10035, Greece.

*Wooden Shoes Books* has published or is publishing an "Anarchist Songbook." For more information, write to: *Wooden Shoe Books*, 112 S. 20th St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

The fifth edition of *The International Permaculture Species Yearbook* will soon be available. For more information, write to: *TIPSY*, 40A Brooks St., Worcester, Massachusetts 01606. Prepublication price: \$15.00 (U.S.). □

#### Akwesasne Support

Dear Friends:

In order to facilitate our work on the issue of Native sovereignty and self-sufficiency, we, the *Riverdale Greens*, wish to expedite the process of public outreach by engaging the *Akwesasne Support Committee of Toronto* to perform educational work on native and ecological issues.

The *Riverdale Greens* encourage all individuals who would like a tax receipt for contributions to send a cheque denoting their area(s) of interest to the *Riverdale Greens Constituency Association*, whose policy it is to send all monies earmarked with a memo for "Native Ecology" directly, wholly, and exclusively to the *Akwesasne Support Committee of Toronto*, for disbursement to *Akwesasne Notes* and/or the *Akwesasne Freedom School*.

Michael Tegmeyer,  
Chief Financial Officer  
*Riverdale Greens*

*Kick It Over* wishes to note that people outside of Canada cannot receive tax credits for donations to the *Riverdale Greens Constituency Association*. We recommend that all donations for "Native Ecology" outside of Canada go directly to: *Akwesasne Support Committee of Toronto*, 456 Spadina Ave., 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2G8.



D, E, A, R, K, I, C, I, T, O, V, E, R,

## Lending Faerie Wings to Gay Grief

An open letter to Robyn Turney:

I just finished reading Part 1 of "Coping With Gay Grief." Thank-you for speaking. I would like to apologize for not being there to support you -- I feel the need for close, loving community, which means honest initiation of communication. I also feel the need for a close, loving, faggot "family", where healing each other is part of our love. I think we're on the right track with the *Radical Faeries*. A group of about 15 of us met for winter solstice, and we plan to continue with regular circles at the full moon. Welcome brother sissie.

I was travelling the U.S. at the time that Bob died. When I returned to Toronto, I heard that you were in Ottawa. Your distance allowed me to do nothing, to not even consider you might not be OK. Admittedly, you and I don't even know each other very well, but should there be such distance between anarcho-faggots? I don't think so. I'm sorry to have been no help so far; I would like to offer my help now. I would also like to share with you some of my more recent experiences dealing with grief and loss.

I went to the March on Washington this past October. I was there for a week, with a lover from Toronto, Mark. We spent a lot of time just being with other faeries for a few days, and watched Washington DC fill up with queers. It was more crowded out on the street than it is in the Eaton Centre at Xmas time. The day of the march, about 200 faeries gathered. We had a morning circle, some of us ate mushrooms, and we joined with about 150 anarchists and waited for the parade to begin. We began all together, but boredom & impatience soon separated us. After about a two hour wait we began moving. The first contingent began around 12:30, and we finished the march around 4:30, and the march was still coming in an hour later. Estimates say 650,000 people. I went with Mark and another faerie friend to the Names project. Thousands of hand sewn banners were all laced together, with names of people who had died of AIDS. I had two distant friends who have died, but I never felt emotional about it. I was standing there talking photos, feeling distant and objective. First Mark began to cry, and then so did I. All around us were people crying together, holding each other, friends and strangers, in a loving support. And we weren't all weeping silently. Some of us sobbed, and sniffed, and howled. Since then I have cried almost every time I've even read mention of the Names project, remembering that time in

Washington. Two days later there was a civil disobedience at the Supreme Court, which began with a circle led by Starhawk, where we called our collective energy to heal the PWA's we knew who are still alive. More tears, and more loving sense of community.

It was after the time in Washington that the energy came together for a faeries circle in Toronto, but it's about time! There's one that's already been going for a while in Ottawa too, so I imagine the warm weather will bring gatherings. Don't despair, Robyn, there are some of us trying, and some of us have very similar views of the world, and maybe even dreams... Come play with the faeries!

Be Free!  
Love Kenn,  
Toronto

## Male White Trash

Dear Laure/Ron Hayley and Others  
Posing the 'Human Nature' Question:

Q: What is human nature?

A: It is a philosophical term, often used to justify "evil", "aggression", "competition", and therefore capitalism et al (i.e. Hobbes, Darwin, Burke, Kahn, and a bunch of other MWT -- male white trash.

Q: Ahem. Okay. Enough diatribe. What does human nature mean?

A: hu man  
humus (masc.): animated being  
manus(masc.): the hand of that being  
humanus: man, homme, mann,  
mankind, hombre, etc.  
Homo Sapiens  
man wise

nature  
natura: to be born  
ura: the result of an action or process

What a load of rot it all boils up to, eh? I ask you Laure -- do you see yourself in this mire of pen(is)al lingus? All philosophers that discussed human nature made it clear that they meant the nature of MAN, as distinct from the nature of woman (a sub-species). Given those *abhorrent* limitations, human nature is generally defined as: that set of characteristics (innate, *not* acculturated!) that differentiates men from other species. The philosophers weren't referring to corporal characteristics (i.e. opposable thumb, bipedal) but "nobler" stuff that gave their lives meaning (such as getting their books published, and trumping each other in rhetoric).

The Hobbesian line goes like this: The

"thrust" towards self-preservation is the nature of being human that other factors follow from. In order to survive in a non-surplus state of nature, men had to compete for resources (i.e. food, shelter, procreators); competition implies aggression and the acquisition of a "fortress"/propertarian mentality, and the dominion over all non-men. In short: the predominant values of our society today. Though we can't hang it all on Hobbes. He was just imagining MAN in the state of nature through the blinders *his* society had on him, and on it goes (who said philosophers are visionaries?). This 'line' continues to re-surface -- the idea that self-preservation means struggle vs. cooperation; competition vs. compassion, *homo-geneity* vs. diversity -- through the dialectic of Darwin to Adam Smith, and is tautologically sustained (we compete because we need to survive, and in order to survive we must compete), vice-versa ad nauseam.

Of course, there's always the theories that man is 'good' by nature. What does "good" mean? It depends, of course on who is calling the moral shots. The Platonic/Judeo-Christian (J.C.) tradition purports, that yes all MEN are wont to be good, but only a chosen elite (Plato's philosopher King; J.C.'s, popes, bishops, and other poms) are truly good enough. All that the rest of *men* could hope to do was to be told HOW to be good (and where and when and with whom under what conditions). Naturally, all that women could dare to hope for was a benevolent dictator (in the home, church/state).

I agree Laure. Who (yes, just *Who*?) still seems to *need* this human nature bogus? The implications of it have been, and remain to be, *his*-historically malignant. I also agree that anarchists clinging to such an oppressive idea like 'human nature' is to unwittingly use a tactical strategy of our oppressors. Human nature, *by definition*, is immutable and innate. I for one don't, won't, be mis-placed *again* in somebody's idea of my whoness.

Without h.n. theories, we are faced with the much more horrific task of dealing with what we find ourselves to actually *be*, as opposed to some ideal. Suddenly, we have to examine *practical*, realities like our own relation to other humyns, other species, and even our terracentric (as opposed to cosmological) biases. Dealing with these things as they are is a lot trickier and stickier than dealing with a load of hypothetical oughts and shoulds.

As for Hayley's argument that, humans being "endowed... with intellect, intuition, senses, will, emotion, and

desire [to fulfill the] corresponding needs of truth, values, beauty, freedom, love and satisfaction *plus* the two impulses of imagination and eros" to fulfill "hope and self esteem." The words used have that noble, glowy halo effect, kind of like the man from Glad's hair and suit. It's what's *in* the bag, not who is selling it or how it is dressed up.

What I mean specifically is, firstly, the six major faculties are arbitrarily demarcated. *How* does one abstract emotion from desire, the intellect from the senses, or *any* of the above from each other? Human responses and ways-of-being are inextricably interconnected. For example, I don't claim to be writing this letter with only my intellect and my senses, but my emotions desire, and will. My 'intellect' would not be without passion; it would have no will, no desire if my emotions and intuitions did not nurture 'it'. I find it absurd to talk about these qualities in such a particulate way.

The "needs" Hayley mentioned (beauty, freedom, truth, etc.) are so abstract to have no meaning. How does one distinguish 'truth' from 'values', for example? And again, who decides *what* they are. The word 'truth' is rooted in verus (masc., L) cum verity, cum virtue. We *can't* use words like 'truth' so loosely, since even the word itself is imbued with moral connotations, imposing a 'value' that we might not intend.

Imagination and eros: yes perhaps, but *who* needs imagination and eros when you don't have bread and water?

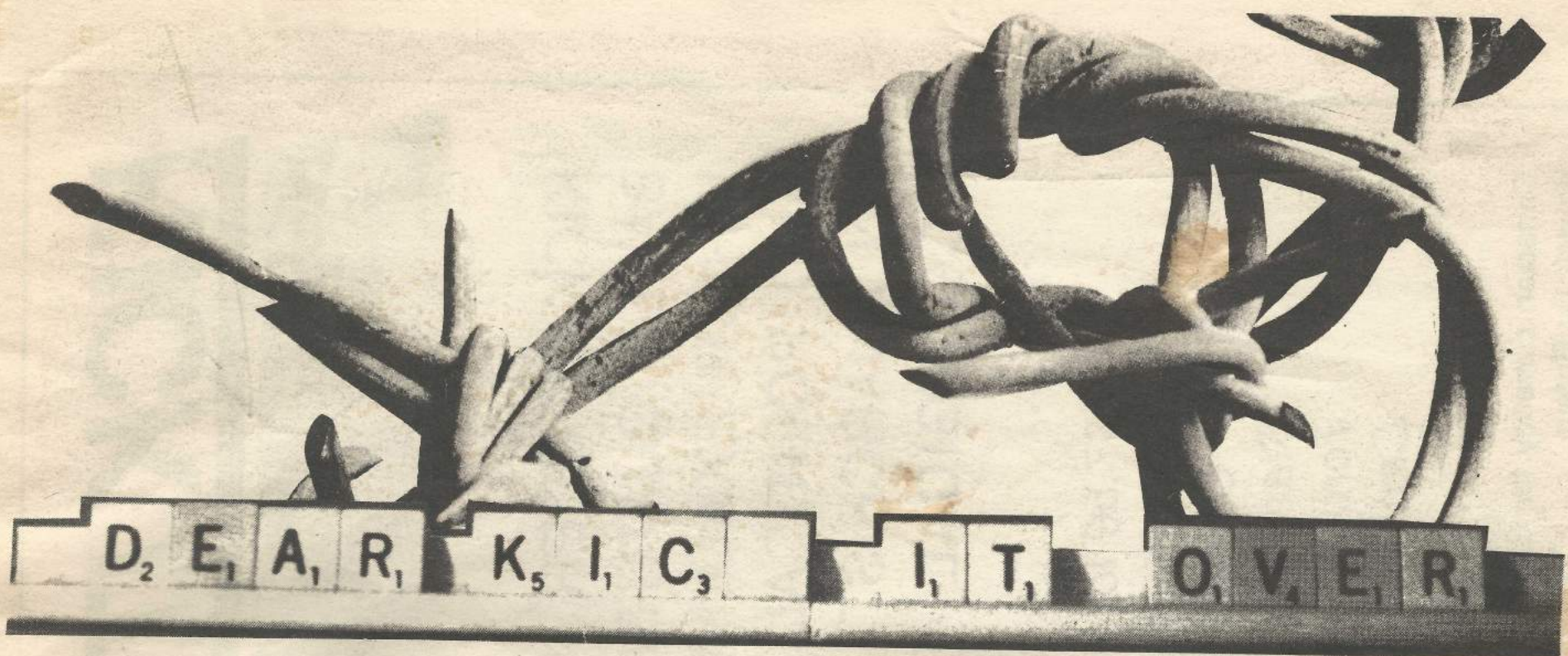
At least even Hobbes dealt with basic, as opposed to bourgeois, survival. Hope and self-esteem are at least experiential (as opposed to abstract) outcomes, but the latter is a rather ego-centric view of eros.

The conclusion of your "argument" ("when people become alienated from their own needs ... wasteful, conspicuous consumption") inadvertently tells us what those abstract 'needs' (truth, beauty, etc.) are *not*. They are *not* (according to Hayley) authority, power, order, control, etc. If this is the case, why not deal with these constructs (order, control, etc.) *per se*, rather than calling what-they-are-not nebulous constructs like 'truth'? My experience of so-called truth, is probably very different from yours.

'Nuf said. Hanging onto that rusty human nature, under *any* guise, helps to sustain the machinery of fixing us in space and time. I want fluidity, growth and change, personally.

His-historically, intended or not, h.n. theories have been *powerful* tools for patrie-statists (theosophic and secular) Re-vamping them to fit an 'anarchist vision' simply is not sufficient -- what if our blessed theorists miss something?





The way past philosophers missed 57% of the population (the ones with cunts)? I am *not* being flippant. I *too* was blinderized by the Grail of de-fining human nature before I began to question even the posing/posers of the h.n. question: who posed the questions and to what ends? Doesn't the question itself rest on a lot of very important presuppositions? Not to mention artificially contrive the parameters of the answer? (Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, who was keeping the noodles warm for the dogmatists? Not this catma.)

Poggi Fontana, Phd (Primate hastening devolution)  
Montreal, Quebec

#### In Defense of Deep Ecology

To the Editor:

My reaction to the Kick It Over articles by Murray Bookchin and Janet Biehl (Winter 1987, "Social Ecology vs Deep Ecology" and "An Eco-Feminist Looks at Deep Ecology") was, did they read the same sources on deep ecology as I did? I certainly have not come across anything which suggests that deep ecologists "denigrate" humanity or deny individuality, as Bookchin suggests they do. Neither do I believe, as Biehl does, that deep ecologists think of wilderness as a wild chaotic place associated with the female sex. My understanding of deep ecology is that it promotes individual self-realization, and also realization of an extended self which encompasses all beings. Deep ecologists criticize the dominant and patriarchal view of nature which associates nature with female and thinks of nature as chaos to be controlled, and instead look to the origin of the word "wilderness" which does not imply "wild", but "will of the land".

Bookchin and Biehl's criticisms of deep ecology demonstrate, not a careful reading of Arne Naess, Bill Devall and others, but an angry misreading. Social ecologists, eco-feminists and deep ecologists, as I understand them, are all groups which are deeply concerned with the present state of relations between humans and between human and non-human nature, and which feel there is a need for radical societal change. It seems to me that in order for change to be brought about what is needed is for groups to join together over similarities; to offer support and validation for what is agreed on, and constructive and careful criticism for what is not. Exaggerating differences and creating further divisions between groups, as Bookchin and Biehl's

articles attempt to do, whether inadvertently or not, can only serve to keep people from uniting in struggle. I do not suggest that differences or problems should be ignored. There is a place for criticism and suggestions. However, the type of reactionary and narrow attack made by Bookchin and Biehl can only serve to widen dichotomies between groups, and to perpetuate dualistic thinking, something I thought was the goal of all the groups involved to get beyond.

Sincerely,  
J. Pearce  
York University, Ontario

#### Not Disappointed

Dear KIO,

I've been enjoying (and learning from) all the back issues. I haven't been disappointed by a single issue. Thanks. It's really something to follow how issues develop over time, from articles to the reaction in letters and the response to letters and then the subtle shift as ideas that were once 'borderline' become more acceptable and mature. You have a history/heritage of groundbreaking that is uncommon. What is really amazing to me is the way the emotions come through in the writing, so that very little is reducible to dogma... Keep it up!

D.B.  
Peaks Island, Maine

#### Appeal From Uruguay

The following letter was translated from Spanish by Lilith Finkler:

Dear Friends,

In this letter, we wish to present you with our new bulletin, *Encuentro*. In it, we summarize the latest successes and activities of *Casacuentro* (Meeting Place). We are thinking of publishing the bulletin regularly and sending it to those who share our goal of creating an experience of ecological and communal self-management. At the same time, it could serve as a centre of empowerment for the alternative development of the dominant model in the real world: a new economy and another development that will promote the growth of people and not things.

Although the condition and the ongoing progress of *Casacuentro* signifies very important economic strength, we are still not financially independent in our

various activities. Once again, we must request the support and solidarity of those people who share the goals of this project. In order to maintain the editorial functioning and one print shop, which is our primary productive activity at *Casacuentro*, we need to collect \$10,000 in no more than two months. To this end, we have created a support fund to which all contributions are welcome. There will be more information about this in our next bulletin.

Finally, because we understand that this project will include more than just us, we wish to remind you that it is vital that we feel mutual recognition and that we rely on your solidarity and that you can rely on ours.

Hope to hear from you soon. A fraternal hug from all of us.

Silvana, Alejandra, Manfredo  
c/o Casacuentro  
Millan 4113-15  
Montevideo, Uruguay

#### In Memory of Kevin

Dear KIO People,

After reading the article on gay grief we wanted to share something good we organized.

About 6 weeks after Kevin left his body with an AIDS diagnosis, a small group of us had a dinner party in celebration of our association with him. We were 4 friends, his mother, father and sister. It was pot luck with plenty of wine. As the evening went on, people spontaneously told stories about Kevin. We recalled funny times, idiosyncrasies, and how he touched the hearts of so many children and adults in his life. After some time we began to share what he had taught each one of us personally. Our magical moments with him.

It was wonderful laughter-filled evening. And there were some tears too.

We found that it was appropriate to meet when we did -- with everyone having begun some part of their grieving in the 6 weeks since his body was laid in the earth.

The gathering provided a way to come together and support one another in the grieving process. And each one of us left feeling a renewed connection with Kevin in our hearts, and with one another.

Here are some resources Kevin found helpful as he faced leaving his body:

*Easy Death* by Da Free John (available at the Dawn Horse Bookstore, 75 Blantyre Ave. Scarborough 416-698-0306) and other literature by the same author.

*Healing AIDS*, a tape by Louise Hay, particularly the side on visualization (available at Supplements Plus, on Church near Wellesley in Toronto).

Kevin's life and the way he consciously approached his death reminded us all of the following:

- don't guilt-trip yourself
- don't dump on others
- transcend the ego
- laughter always helps
- all life is change
- stand free while maintaining relationship and keeping the heart open
- don't worry
- death is inevitable -- so is birth
- remember love

In appreciation to Kevin,  
Theresa Doga and Susanne Warren  
Toronto, Ontario

#### Woodcock Off Base

Dear Friends,

Without wishing to negate many of the fine points in George Woodcock's article "From Tradition to Revolution", I must point out that he's way off base with the statement that suicide rates in Sweden are due to the welfare state.

Eisenhower made the same mistake when he was President and ended up apologizing within the week when he realized that, for the principle to hold true, any state which went "cradle-to-the-grave" would have had a significant rise in it's suicide rate *after* it chose that route. And that just isn't so.

Geographic and cultural factors seem to play a far more significant role. Just look at the Scandinavian gods/goddesses from the past. Anything but upbeat!

Sincerely,  
N.W.  
Toronto, Ontario

#### Anarchist/Feminist Synthesis

... I would hate to see KIO go the way of so many other fine anarchist publications. I have enjoyed the two issues you have sent, as has my wife... (I'm the anarchist, she's the feminist -- your publication is the synthesis of our views). Keep up the good work!

Jim  
Chicago, Illinois